Keele University Faculty of Education

An evaluation of two reading strategies in England and Florida

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SUBMISSION OF THESIS FOR A RESEARCH DEGREE

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Abstract

Reading Wars!

As schools in England introduced the phonics checklist during 2012, the question of the best approach to teach children to read is again a matter for educational debate. Jolliffe (2004) claimed that the most effective way to teach children to read has been contested in schools for many years. Two different views of how to teach reading through either Whole Language theory or phonics have become contested strategies in this debate. Goodman (1998) described these competing pedagogies as '*The reading wars'*.

Lemann (1997) commented that Whole Language theory supports the notion that learning to read in English is comparable to learning to speak the language and is therefore a natural process nurtured by unstructured immersion. However Moats (2007) concluded that phonics takes a different view where learning to read focuses on learning sounds and letter combinations that convey the English language's forty four sounds. The letter to sound correspondence is then applied to deciphering the code of written English.

The importance of improving literacy standards has been a fundamental part of education policy in both England and the United States for the past twenty years. In the context of the standards agenda, British Governments and American States have tried different approaches to improve test scores in reading. This study evaluates two reading strategies employed in England and Florida between 2000 and 2003 for children scoring below average in reading tests. The Accelerated Literacy Learning programme in Florida aligns closely with Whole Language theory whilst Additional Literacy Support in England relies heavily on a phonics approach. This thesis

investigates how effective the use of two different approaches to reading has been on reading test scores over a sustained period.

Three fundamental sub-questions are considered regarding practice in both settings:

1. What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?

2. What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?

3. How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?

The results from test scores in both settings indicate that Additional Literacy Support made little improvement in the longer term to reading test scores in England. However the long term effects of Accelerated Literacy Learning produced positive results.

The observations and interviews with the practitioners in both settings investigated possible reasons for the test score outcomes. These are reported in themes of training, compliance and the style of pedagogy employed discretely to comply with the policy in either setting. The research concludes that an over reliance on teaching decoding skills is not appropriate for all pupils. Pupils who did not respond well to instruction on how to decode, made greater improvement when exposed to a variety of strategies based on engagement, meaning and comprehension.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family and friends for supporting me through this journey over the past eight years. I was inspired to write this study by my remarkable daughter Rachel and I dedicate this thesis to her. My long suffering wife Karen has unselfishly allowed me to pursue my studies whilst providing unconditional love and support and has been incredibly patient. My elder daughter Hannah has also constantly encouraged me to investigate and write. My wonderful Mum Winnie showed trust and faith in me to complete this work and has been with me in spirit throughout my journey and my Aunt Lil who encouraged me to embark the course before she died in 2004.

I must also thank staff, pupils and parents in two Primary schools in England for working together with me as well as Mike Unwin and Jill Billinge for encouraging me and allowing access to conduct work in school. Their support has been much appreciated.

I could not have completed the study without the wonderful help and friendship shown to me by colleagues in Florida. I would like to sincerely thank Dr Sharon Kelley who went out of her way to help me and Elaine Grohol for her professionalism and patience.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Literature review concerning policy

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter Four: Descriptive Findings

Chapter 5: Analysis of Data

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter 1 Introduction

'To acquire the habit of reading is to construct for yourself a refuge from almost all the miseries of life' Somerset Maugham.

1.0 Overview of introduction

The introduction chapter provides the historical, political and policy context for this study in its chapters on Literature Review, Methodology, Findings, Analysis and Discussion. The Introduction explains my personal motivation, perspectives as a practitioner and opportunity for writing this research. In addition the introduction examines different philosophical views of pedagogy which are used to address the same policy of raising test scores in both settings. The introduction notes the importance of the improvement in reading scores and how this is related to notions of human and social capital.

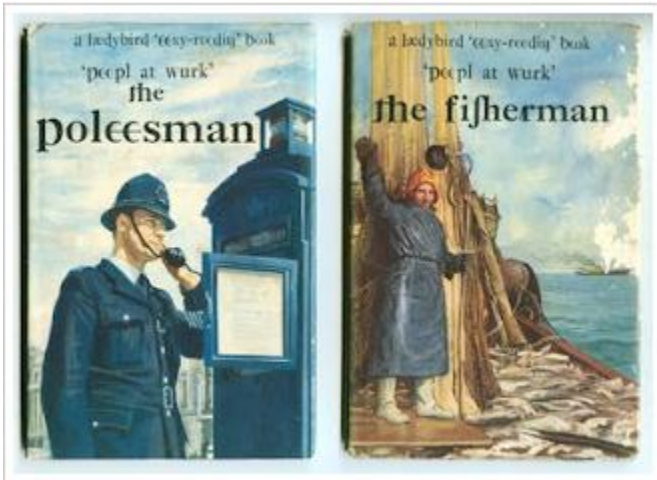
1.1 My Reasons for conducting this study

The teaching of reading has always been of great interest to me since my own early experience of the written word via the experimental 'Initial Teaching Alphabet' which was taught to me in the 1960s when I was in primary school.

The Initial Teaching Alphabet (ita) was invented by Conservative M.P. Sir James Pitman. Hall (2001) outlines Pitman's idea of children first learning to read using ita and later being introduced to Standard English orthography between the ages of seven and eight. Hall (2001) describes how each phoneme in the English language is represented by one character. Hall claims that Pitman believed such a representation would help children to understand the basic principles of reading.

Hayes and West, (1969) describe ita as a phonics based approach designed to enable children to read phonetically by simplifying and reducing the combinations of letters which represent sounds in Standard English and therefore a more simple and efficient way to learn to read.

I read books such as these pictured below and wrote all of my school work in an ita phonic style.



My own perception based on my experience of this experiment in reading is that ita had a negative effect on my reading development. I did not read and write in a Standard English format until I was nine years old. This perception is supported by Robson (2001) in a BBC News article entitled 'Educashunal lunacie or wizdom?' Robson was taught ita in the 1960s and commented that many of his friends blamed their poor spelling on being taught to read using ita in their early years of school. Robson argues:

> 'I suffered ita for my first few years at school, with the consequence that at the age of seven I could barely read or write' (BBC News: 05/09 2001).

I too believe that ita had a detrimental effect on my ability to read and spell Standard English correctly. I attempted to read and write using phonic strategies which were only effective in words which could be decoded phonetically. As Palmer and Reason (2000) point out, over 15% of words

in English are not phonetically represented and so words which were not phonetic did not convey any recognition or understanding to me.

I felt that I was in effect converting from one code to another when I transferred over to Standard English. In the light of my understanding of teaching and learning early reading skills, it could be said that my transition from ita to standard English was not well managed by the school. When I moved from one class using ita to another class which did not use ita, there were no transitional arrangements made to facilitate the move to standard English.

As a consequence of my experience as a child reader I became self-taught using whole word approaches to developing my reading through a sight vocabulary of familiar words. I developed coping strategies such as copying words written on the blackboard by my teacher which I presumed were the date and title, because they were in the same places as the date and title written by my previous teacher who had used ita. I also immersed myself in the world of print around me with children's books by Enid Blyton and Richmal Crompton as well as football programmes and comics. I used picture clues and context clues to make the transition to Standard English.

My interest in investigating the teaching of reading was further developed in 2000 when my younger daughter had difficulty learning to read. She suffered from hearing loss and had language acquisition delay and consequently attended speech therapy until the age of six.

The main strategy employed by my daughter's primary school for teaching her to read was a phonics-based approach. As her hearing was poor, phonics was not proving an effective strategy with her. When her reading difficulties became more noticeable to her school through poor SATs scores, she was taught by a teaching assistant in a small group using a programme called Additional Literacy Support (ALS). ALS was a remediation strategy attached to the National Literacy Strategy employed to address the difficulties which some pupils had in accessing the

Literacy Hour and to improve SATs scores (Barber in ALS, 1999). These difficulties were outlined in QCA's analysis of KS1 results (1998) and OFSTED's evaluation of the National Literacy Strategy (1998) (in ALS module handbook 1999).

In my daughter's circumstance the Additional Literacy Support programme consisted of re-teaching the phonics which she could not access due to her hearing loss. Both of the strategies used to teach reading to myself and my daughter were phonics-based. Our anecdotal experience of the approaches was that they had not been entirely successful with either of us but for different reasons. In the case of my daughter this was due to hearing loss and with me it was in the conversion of one set of symbols to represent sounds into a second set of symbols to represent the same sounds. This led me to question phonics pedagogy itself, the standard of delivery and the appropriateness of using phonics with all pupils.

As a primary school teacher during the late nineties, I too was charged with implementing the phonics-based approach of Additional Literacy Support with children in my class who found reading difficult. The programme was implemented in a short space of time two years after the introduction of The National Literacy Strategy through what Moss (2006:12) described as 'fast policy'. However, despite government support for the programme, Additional Literacy Support (ALS) did not appear to be working with my own daughter. She was frustrated by her hearing condition and the repetition of phonics in ALS appeared futile because she could not clearly distinguish sounds.

I was also interested to examine the effect of ALS on pupils in my own class to see whether their experience was consistent with that of my own daughter. My daughter's hearing impairment seemed a more significant factor compared with the children I taught who were below the average score in KS1 English SATs as her medical condition meant that any phonetic approach would be

ineffective. However, many of the difficulties in recognising retaining and applying sounds taught through ALS were common to both my daughter and my pupils. ALS was the British government's preferred strategy for pupils scoring below average in KS1 reading SATs in primary schools between 1999 and 2003. As a teacher and a parent involved in this phonics-based pedagogy, I became increasingly entangled in the debate over the most appropriate approaches to the teaching of reading.

The next two sections will examine the key moments in the development of Whole Language theory and phonics-based pedagogy in the United States and England in order to set the context for this study. My experience as a primary school teacher in England and how this influenced my decision to write this thesis will be compared to my experience of pedagogy in Florida. The notion of human capital is also included in this chapter to preface this study and demonstrate the importance of literacy as an economic imperative. The final section articulates the research questions which emerged from my experience in the field of teaching children to read. The reason for using Florida as a comparison with England was due to the interest in evaluating a Whole Language approach which was in use at the same time as a phonics-based approach. The use of phonics had become widespread in England due to the National Literacy Strategy. This restricted my ability to evaluate Whole Language programmes in England at the time. America provided an alternative approach to reading in the English language and shared the common ground of target–led policy. It was therefore appropriate to use America and England to evaluate the relative merits of different approaches to the same issue of raising test scores for children performing below average in reading.

1.2 Differences in approach to the teaching of reading:

Phonics and Whole Language Theory: key moments in the history of teaching reading in England and Florida.

As mentioned in the previous section, the teaching of reading is a contentious issue. It has become a debate which has polarised opinion over recent decades. The historical context concerning learning to read in England in the eighteenth century was dominated by a phonics-based approach as exemplified by Thomas Dilworth (1745) in his instructional text 'A New Guide to the English Tongue' a book of word lists, their pronunciation and grammar rules. Dilworth's theory of learning to read suggested that children needed to break down the complex skill of reading into its smallest components of letters, blends, and digraphs before moving on to attempt larger components, such as words, sounds, and sentences. Through learning letter-sound relationships, children would be equipped with a decoding formula which could be applied when encountering unfamiliar words. Commentators such as Lemann (1997) claim that this phonetic approach can also be seen in use in the United States later in the nineteenth century with Noah Webster's instruction book 'The Original Blue Back Speller' (1824). During the early part of the twentieth century, most American schools continued to use the traditional method of initially teaching the forty four sounds heard in English speech and then relating them to the two hundred letter groupings that appear in English writing. According to Pearson (2004) once pupils had mastered these skills, most pupils could sound out words.

However not all educationalists agree that phonics is the most effective method of teaching reading. Meek (1982) and Goodman (1986) advocate a different view of how to teach reading referred to as Whole Language theory. This approach supports the concept that learning to read

and write English is similar to learning to speak it. In this perspective learning to read is a natural, unconscious process promoted by natural engagement with the language. In Whole Language theory, children progress from knowing the alphabet to being able to read whole words. If a word was unfamiliar then it could be identified accurately through the use of context clues (Lemann, 1997). In the United States, during the 1930s, schools began to switch from phonics to a form of whole-word reading instruction springing from what Goodman (1989) believes is Dewey's, child-centered pedagogy. Early American movements, such as 'Individualized Reading' (Veatch, 1959) and 'Language Experience' (Stauffer, 1980) also contributed to the advancement of Whole Language theory. The psycholinguistic work of Goodman (1965) and Brown (1970) suggested that reading was more about acquiring language than a perceptual process of decoding. Studies by Anderson & Pearson (1984) in reading comprehension, inspired by cognitive psychology, claimed that meaning was the essential component of reading.

When Whole Language theory emerged as a movement in the 1970s and 1980s, it challenged the conventional wisdom of phonics-led instruction. Goodman (1988) presents Whole Language instruction as humanistic, enjoyable and an intellectually challenging alternative to repetitive phoneme drills. Pearson suggests that Whole Language instruction:

> 'Turns the classroom from a factory floor into a nurturing environment in which children naturally blossom' (Pearson, 2004:20).

The empirical research presented in Chapter four of this study compares an intervention programme based on a phonics approach with an intervention programme based on a Whole Language approach. My own experience as a teacher made me aware that the use of Additional Literacy Support in schools in England between 2000 and 2003 relied heavily on phonics to help pupils aged seven to nine improve their test scores in national reading tests. In contrast, during an

educational visit to Florida in 2001, I was made aware of a Whole Language style intervention strategy being employed to address the same issue of teaching of reading to children scoring below average in reading tests. A District Instructionalist in Florida (similar to English LEA inspector) claimed that a programme called Accelerated Literacy Learning was being successfully employed in many districts of Florida. According to Wahl (2002) Accelerated Literacy Learning was based largely on an established Whole Language pedagogy of teaching children to read called Reading Recovery. I became interested in the effects of the two reading intervention programmes, Additional Literacy Support and Accelerated Literacy Learning being used in the two settings. Pearson (2004) suggests that the specific vehicle for the spread of Whole Language theory through American public education was Reading Recovery, developed in New Zealand by Marie Clay (1985). This programme had produced excellent results in Clay's initial pilot research with six and seven year olds who were having difficulty reading. Reading Recovery itself draws upon both phonics and Whole Language theory, but according to Pearson (2004) in America Reading Recovery has served predominantly as a transmission device for Whole Language theory.

My interest in the comparison of strategies for the teaching of reading was later developed during visits to Florida between 2001 and 2007. I was able to arrange visits to local schools to observe Accelerated Literacy Learning in practice and attend training courses run for the teachers delivering Accelerated Literacy Learning. Anecdotal reports suggested to me by practitioners in Florida were positive. These were key issues which prompted me to consider an evaluative study of the two approaches.

Both Accelerated Literacy Learning and Additional Literacy Support concentrated on the age range of six to eight years old as pivotal in pupils' future success in reading. In England, ALS was

used to target this age range as part of a national strategy and in Florida ALL was employed as part of a district strategy to improve test scores.

My initial thoughts were about the context and the process of the reading programmes being employed in England and Florida. In terms of the context, I wanted to investigate why these programmes were being used at this particular time and in terms of process, I wanted to know how they were attempting to help emergent readers to develop. In considering the context of the two approaches to the teaching of reading, this study has an historical perspective as the backgrounds for both programmes are also set in philosophical and political contexts which will be set out in the next section.

1.3 Key moments in literacy support: Additional Literacy Support, England.

It can be argued that the two approaches to the teaching of reading outlined in 1.2 have enjoyed relative popularity and support at various times over the past fifty years. Until the 1960s phonics was the most commonly used strategy in England. However, The Plowden Report (1967) in England questioned the dominant philosophy of a knowledge-centred education system and advocated more of a child-centred philosophy. The essence of the report is shown in the opening to Plowden's second chapter which declares:

> 'At the heart of the educational process lies the child' (Plowden 1967:2).

In the context of the competing theories of learning to read, the child-centred philosophy reflected a more of a Whole Language approach to reading because it favoured the interests and intrinsic curiosity of the child. Supporters of Whole Language theory such as Smith and Goodman promoted this approach to reading and their persuasive arguments led to Whole Language theory becoming a more popular method in schools in the early 1970s. However by the mid-1970s Labour

Prime minister James Callaghan began to question on child-centred teaching methods believing that child-centred pedagogy was not producing high quality outcomes:

> 'On another aspect, there is the unease felt by parent and others about the new informal methods of teaching which seem to produce excellent results when they are in well-qualified hands but are much more dubious when they are not. …There is little wrong with the range and diversity of our courses. But is there sufficient thoroughness and depth in those required in after life to make a living?' (Callaghan, 1976: Speech at Ruskin House).

When the Conservative party were elected in UK in 1979, some of their MPs such as Rhodes Boyson and Keith Joseph called for a return to more traditional knowledge-led pedagogy which reflected the core values and beliefs of the Conservative Party. The later Conservative government of John Major in the early 1990s also supported this notion of traditional knowledge based education in its 'Back to basics' agenda. Barber (1997) argues that the momentum towards more traditional methods of teaching also continued under New Labour in 1997 through their knowledge based Literacy Hour policy:

> 'The NLS continues the pattern of centralised changes in education which began with the Education Reform Act of 1988' (Barber 1997:25).

Barber comments that in order to meet specific targets to improve reading standards, New Labour included a phonics-based approach to the teaching of reading citing research by Adams (1990) which argued that systematic teaching of phonics had yielded excellent results in a number of studies. Barber claims that phonics could be taught systematically and could be readily tested. So the appeal of quantifiable units of testable knowledge has been welcomed by recent governments in order to assess progress in reading scores and compile quantitative data to determine the relative success of programmes in education. Beard's 1997 'Review of Research and Other Related

Evidence' provided the context for New Labour's Literacy Task Force to promote a more knowledge–led method of teaching reading which included a strong emphasis on phonics contained in ALS.

Additional Literacy Support relied heavily on remediating areas of the National Literacy Strategy in order to, as Barber (1999: in ALS) describes:

'Help pupils in KS2 who have already fallen behind in Literacy' (1999:2).

Barber states that ALS would provide help through prescribed content:

'The programme offers a set of structured teaching materials' (1999:2).

Consequently one could take the view that over the past thirty years the ideological and political landscape in England had changed and returned to favour more knowledge-led approaches which in terms of reading has been in the form of phonics instruction.

'Plowden's view that:

'At the heart of the educational process lies the child' (The Plowden Report 1967 Ch 2:7)

was abandoned in favour of:

'The school curriculum is at the heart of education' (DES 1981:1.1).

The two contrasting statements above demonstrate the philosophical differences between the knowledge-led approach reinstated in England, and the more child-centred methods which had now been replaced.

1.4 Key moments in literacy support: Accelerated Literacy Learning, United States

Historical developments in the United States indicate that the methods for effective reading instruction have been contested argued since the 1930s. Commentators such as Lemann (1977) suggest that child-centred pedagogy developed in the United States by Dewey (1902) challenged traditionalist pedagogy for lacking holistic understanding of students and being overly focused on

content rather than process. In the context of the competing theories of learning to read, the child-centred philosophy reflects more of a Whole Language approach to reading because it favours the interests and intrinsic curiosity of the child. Supporters of Whole language theory such as Smith and Goodman enabled the Whole Language approach to teaching reading to become more dominant in the late1970s (Lemann,1997). Progressive methods in education became influential in America in the mid-twentieth century and schools began to switch from phonics to Whole Language reading pedagogy. Supporters of Whole Language theory presented it as an interesting and stimulating alternative to drill and practice methods in phonics.

Although Whole Language theory became popular in the United States, critics of this approach became dissatisfied with poor levels of literacy being recorded in American schools following its implementation. Flesch (1955) argued in his book 'Why Johnny Can't Read' that Whole Language theory was not improving standards of literacy. Both Republican and Democrat parties were also concerned by low levels of literacy. Consequently a return to a traditional, knowledge-led style of teaching and learning started to take effect by the early 1990s as the standards-based agenda began to take shape under Senator Bill Clinton. By the time Clinton became president in 1993 the standards agenda had received a wide support with the American middle class voter. The Clinton administration set up the National Reading Panel (NRP) which was a national panel with the stated aim of assessing the effectiveness of different approaches used to teach reading. The findings of the NRP were supportive of phonics-based approaches constructed on research evidence available in the United States.

Lemann (2004) claims that by the late 1990s supporters of phonics-based instruction gained authority in the United States and it was now the duty of individual states to implement a phonics-led approach to reading. However some phonics supporters such as Moats (2007) complained that

the NRP's five essential components of effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension had been deliberately misinterpreted by some states so that they could still embrace Whole Language approaches (Moats, 2007).

Despite the shift in emphasis in America to a phonics-led approach, there existed a child-centred, Whole Language theory programme used in Florida called Accelerated Literacy Learning which appeared to defy the momentum of traditionalist ideology dominating the United States at the time. ALL was used in the education district which hosted this study as their pedagogical approach to addressing the standards agenda.

1.5 My experience as a primary school teacher in England at the time of the study

This section provides the context to my own epistemology based on my experience as a primary school teacher. This is relevant to the main point of the research because it provides the context of the debate between Whole Language theory and phonics based instruction in primary school in England. This is based on my real experience of government policy and my engagement with different approaches to the teaching of reading.

I began teaching in 1981 and employed a mixture of progressivist and traditional pedagogy. However from 1988 onwards I was required to teach knowledge organised within traditional subject categories in a didactic manner to whole classes. This style of pedagogy had been imposed upon me a result of the Education Reform act of 1988 as Gillard (2011) comments:

> 'The National Curriculum which resulted from the 1988 Act was almost entirely content-based' (2011:6).

I had become used to ploughing through large content-led curricula and delivering discrete subjects as directed by school management under pressure from LEA and OFSTED inspectors. Gillard (2011) sums up my experience post Education Reform Act:

> ‘It was huge and therefore unmanageable, especially at the primary level, and its introduction resulted in a significant drop in reading standards. It divided the curriculum up into discrete subjects, making integrated 'topic' and 'project' work difficult if not impossible. But perhaps the most damaging outcome of it was that it prevented teachers and schools from being curriculum innovators and demoted them to curriculum 'deliverers' (Gillard, 2011:6).

I had indeed become a curriculum deliverer transmitting bite-sized chunks of knowledge to be easily digested by my pupils. My colleagues and I used to refer to teaching the National Curriculum as the ‘McDonalds Chicken McNugget approach to pedagogy’.

New Labour in 1997 continued with a traditionalist approach to education which had been well established under the previous Conservative government of John Major. New Labour imposed a National Literacy Strategy (1998) which went further in prescription than the National Curriculum and determined exact content and teaching method. My perception of the situation at the time was that I was preoccupied with getting through the requirements rather than addressing the needs of the pupils. I felt uneasy with this approach and questioned its validity. It was not what I had considered an effective approach to meet the needs of the individuals. However, like the rest of my colleagues, I was sent on the National Literacy Strategy training courses and inspected by LEA and school management to determine whether I was delivering the Literacy Strategy with unquestioning precision. During observations of my Literacy Hour lessons, my observer on more

than one occasion used a stopwatch to measure the precise amount of time I had spent on each part of the Literacy Hour. This was to ensure that I was complying explicitly with the requirements of the strategy. During my feedback with my observer, he told me that I had spent a few minutes over the allocated fifteen minutes on the second section of the Literacy hour on word level work. When I defended my approach by remarking that the children had not understood that part of my instruction, the response from my observer was to insist that I rigidly maintain the fifteen minute time allocation rather than deviate from the timings set out in the Literacy Hour. The ability to apply professional discretion was not encouraged by school management and LEA at that time as New Labour's reforms were being rigorously implemented in schools. A similar view to this uncompromising approach is recorded by Gillard (2005):

> 'The Tories had told teachers what to teach. New Labour now set about telling them how to teach it - in explicit detail. The Literacy Hour, to be joined later by the Numeracy Hour, laid down exactly what was to be taught and how it was to be taught, and even specified how many minutes each activity within a lesson should last' (Gillard 2005:4).

I felt bemused at this insistence on precision of delivery. I began to question whether my role was a teacher or a technician delivering a programme. Menter (1997) sums up my feelings as representative of shift in the perception of the role of the teacher at that time which led to:

> 'Destabilizing professional identities through a combination of internal and external pressure' (Menter 1997:136).

Whilst delivering the National Literacy Strategy with my Year 3 class, I became aware of the difficulties of access to literacy for some below average pupils. Some of these pupils were

included in the ALS programme. ALS contained a prescriptive phonics approach as stated in the module handbook:

'ALS will help pupils to consolidate KS1 work particularly in phonics' (ALS, 1999:4).

Some of the pupils in my Year 3 class appeared to be having difficulty retaining the phonics taught in Key Stage 1. Research by Palmer and Reason (2001) confirmed my anecdotal experience that over half of pupils in Year 3 in their study had difficulties with the retention of phonics taught in Year 1 and Year 2. Barber (1999) also describes how Additional Literacy Support was added by New Labour in 1999 as a remediation strategy to try to address difficulties in absorbing and retaining phonics taught in KS1:

> 'The purpose of ALS is to help pupils who have already fallen behind in literacy' (Barber in ALS, 1999:4).

The mixed feelings about my experience of NLS at the time contributed to my desire to examine how ALS affected children who encountered the strategy and how ALS attempted to address their individual needs. New Labour's policy was for 80% of Year Six pupils to achieve Level 4 in English SATs by 2002 and ALS was part of their strategy to improve their test scores. This thesis tracks the progress of pupils using ALS in attempting to achieve New Labour's goal.

1.6 My experience of pedagogy in Florida

After gaining permission from the Educational District Literacy Team in Florida, I requested information on their approach to reading for pupils scoring below average in reading tests. My initial request was to observe the practice for the teaching of reading for the below average children. The reading programme I observed in Florida resembled a modified version of a reading intervention called 'Reading Recovery'. I had previously encountered Reading Recovery in

England being used in the LEA where I taught. At the time of the study the LEA had redirected funding for reading intervention strategies away from Reading Recovery and in to other programmes such as ALS due to a change in the LEA funding formula:

> 'Reading Recovery received a high level of funding, which was distributed to the schools that delivered the programme. Funding is now re-distributed universally as part of the schools' budgets funding formula' (Wirral Reading Recovery Newsletter, 2002).

According to Wahl (2000), Accelerated Literacy Learning (ALL) pioneered by Homan and King was based on the successful use of Reading Recovery in the State. An evaluative study of ALL by Wahl (2002) described it as a student-centred acceleration process designed to accelerate the reading scores of below average pupils to a level commensurate with their peer group. The teachers in Florida had undertaken a year-long structured course, followed by regular top-up sessions, which enabled them to coach children on an individual basis and improve their reading test sores (Wahl, 2002). The ALL programme used the principles of Reading Recovery with direct one-to-one instruction and appropriate reading book resources using predominantly a Whole Language approach. I was able to join the teachers on some of their training sessions which involved some lecturing by the District Instructionalist and reviewing videos of members of the course teaching their pupils to read. The teachers discussed techniques and shared examples of good practice. The aim of the training was to develop effective reading strategies which would develop the individual's reading as well as opportunities for the teachers to share techniques and experiences around common reading problems. The training did cover some phonics but did not concentrate on a systematic delivery of them. Key to the techniques discussed on the course was the children's understanding of text. Reading books would be previewed and rehearsed before the

ALL teaching session. The text was read and analysed during the session and then pupils would be given another book for the following day which would be leveled appropriately depending on their progress.

I decided to simultaneously study the progress of Accelerated Literacy Learning and Additional Literacy Support through observation, interviews and test scores. This would enable me to evaluate the practice in both settings. Chapter 3 will provide full details of the methodology and methods used in this study.

The context for the evaluative comparison was the same in England and Florida because the policy of the respective governments was to address the same issue of improving test scores for pupils scoring below average in reading on standardized scores in each setting (FCAT in Florida, SATs in England). I was interested in the practice influenced by policy to improve test scores because according to Gilbourn and Youdell (2000), the emphasis on test scores was built on the assumption that improvement in tests would lead to enhanced economic performance. This assumption will be discussed in the next section.

1.7 Human social capital rationale for the improvement of test scores in reading.

1.7a Perceptions of literacy linked to economic performance in England.

This section is included in the Introduction to preface the study because of the importance placed on literacy to promote a more productive and effective society. The perception of literacy linked to economic performance is central to the aims of both British and American governments and relates directly to the main aim of this study which is to evaluate the effectiveness of two different strategies to teach reading. As mentioned previously in 1.4 and 1.5 both governments pursued

policies which they believed would improve reading test scores. In this context a study which evaluates the effectiveness of two different approaches to improving reading becomes valuable information for both policy makers and schools in their efforts to enhance the reading skills of their population and in doing so develop human capital.

A general perception highlighted by Barton (1994) suggests that governments in England and America assume that high performance in literacy is linked to both personal economic success and the success of the nation's economy. Linking literacy to economic success is also acknowledged by Bantock (1970) who believed it was the main reason why developed western countries started compulsory primary education. According to Bantock education became increasingly political, as 'an instrument of the state' (Bantock, 1970: 21). Bantock claims that education needed to be systematic to ensure that children leaving compulsory schooling had the skills to function in a changing economic climate. In this respect education needed to facilitate economic growth. Bantock (1970) argues:

> 'Education had become an investment, and the state looked forward to collecting the dividends' (Bantock, 1970: 21).

This view emphasises the importance for governments in achieving high scores in literacy for their pupils as an economic imperative. It highlights the importance of this current study which evaluates two programmes which were chosen as vehicles to achieve this aim.

Both British and American governments share the perception that individuals with poor literacy skills are more likely to be impoverished and in lower paid jobs than others with high levels of literacy citing studies by Frater, (1995), Bynner and Parsons, (2006), OECD, 1997, and UNESCO, 2005b and 2005c. Barton (1994) agrees with conceptual link of literacy and economic success for the individual and society commenting that:

> ‘Adults in the world today who cannot read and write, tend to be the poorest, the least powerful and the oppressed’ (Barton, 1994: 27).

This notion is further supported by the OECD report of 1997 which concludes that literacy dictates social status:

> ‘Literacy is a powerful determinant of an individual’s life chances and quality of life.’ (OECD, 1997:11).

The theme that illiterate individuals often have difficulty in fully participating in the workplace, and can therefore restrain economic growth, is supported by Gee, *et al* (1996) who cites the demand from industry for higher levels of literacy to enable business to compete successfully on an international basis. Commentators such as Pitt (2000) observe that by 1997 in the UK, literacy had become a high priority in both the Labour and the Conservatives parties’ election manifestoes which Pitt maintains led to the literacy initiatives, The National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998) and Skills for Life in Britain (DfEE, 2001).

Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair commented in 1997 that:

> “For years education was a social cause. Today it is an economic imperative. A nation is only as good as its education.” (BBC News, 1997).

One could take the view that Blair’s quote demonstrates New Labour’s belief that education was the driving force of economic prosperity. This theme is developed further by Sir Claus Moser, Chairman of the Basic Skills Agency, who produced the report ‘A Fresh Start’ (DfEE, 1999). Moser’s report claimed that poor levels of literacy in Britain were not politically or economically acceptable (DfEE, 1999). The report concluded that improved literacy skills created better work opportunities for individuals. The Moser report estimated almost seven million adults had literacy skills commensurate with that of an eleven year old.

New Labour's belief that high levels of literacy would link to greater economic performance was reiterated when Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, asked Lord Leitch, Chairman of the National Employment Panel to report:

> 'What the UK's long-term ambition should be for developing skills in order to maximize economic prosperity and productivity? ' (Leitch, 2005:1).

In the report, Leitch advocated that the UK should attempt to become a world leader in skills by 2020 using OECD targets which recommend that all adults should achieve basic skills in functional literacy. The report reiterated the link between low literacy skills and poor employment commenting that individuals with poor literacy skills were:

> 'trapped in a cycle of low skilled, poorly-paid, often short-term employment with few training opportunities and dependence on public support' (Leitch, 2007a).

The majority of New Labour's education policies appeared to be dominated by the determination to raise educational standards in what Docking describes as the 'fuss over standards' (Docking, 2000:127). New Labour's argument was that:

1. Prosperity can only be achieved through competition in world markets.
2. This depends upon having a highly numerate and literate workforce.
3. Standards in English schools compare unfavourably with other countries, particularly in the Pacific Rim.
4. The Government therefore has to raise standards by raising teachers' expectations, as well as establishing challenging targets for pupil achievement.
5. In order to do this, the Government believes it has to change school pedagogy to ensure that classroom practices in England compare favourably with those used abroad; ineffective strategies must be discarded (Docking, 2000).

These points are reiterated by New Labour in the 2001 publication 'Schools Achieving Success' where the document states:

> 'The success of our children at school is crucial to the economic health of the country' and therefore 'Britain must transform the knowledge and skills of its population' (Schools Achieving Success, 2001:5).

Nelson (2003) had reservations about the assumption that improved test results lead to enhanced economic prosperity arguing that the efforts of researchers to find relationships between teaching strategies and pupils' scores have not yielded any formative findings. Smith (2005) agrees claiming any relationships that have been uncovered are:

> 'Difficult to translate into direct implications for policy and practice' (Smith, 2005:52).

Smith (2005) also disputes the assumptions underpinning international comparisons that better schools lead to a better economy. Smith describes this link as spurious and cites research by Le Tendre (1999) and Bracey (1996) as showing any link as 'unproven' (Smith, 2005:52). Stedman (1997) agrees that this link between high performance on test scores and a prosperous economy is uncertain:

> 'International standing is affected more by government trade policies and corporate flight to low wage countries, than by weak school achievement' (Stedman, 1997:4).

The next section deals with the same perception by politicians in America of a link between performance on test scores and a prosperous economy. The purpose of this section is to outline the context of the shared assumption that good levels of literacy create an effective workforce and a prosperous economy.

1.7 b Perceptions of literacy linked to economic performance in United States.

A perception shared by politicians in America is that strong performance in education tests leads to a skilled workforce and a prosperous economy (Levin, 1994). Levin suggests that national policy in the U.S. is:

> 'predicated on an assumption that higher test scores will rescue the economy' (Levin, 1994:249).

Changes in policy such as Goals 2000 which were intended to enable the U.S to compete globally based on international comparisons support this notion (Levin, 1994).

The historical context, for policy on higher test scores dates back to 1983 when the National Commission on Educational Excellence, reported that the U.S. was '*A Nation at Risk*' (NCEE, 1983). The report claims academic underachievement in America required action across five major categories: Standards and Expectations, Content, Time, Teaching, Leadership and Fiscal Support. The Standards and Expectations section highlighted the need to improve test scores to compete globally (NCEE, 1983). The report urged America to adopt educational policies similar to those pursued in Germany and Japan (Levin and Kelley, 1994). Levin and Kelley suggest that politicians in America believed that their own education system was not producing students with effective knowledge and skills who could compete with better educated students in other countries. The Department for Education reported lower test scores and lower literacy levels by American students compared to students in Germany and Japan. American policy makers in the Clinton and later the Bush administrations concluded from '*A Nation at Risk*' (1983) that policies must be put in place to raise test scores in order to ensure economic success (Johnson and Packer, 2000). Levin (1994) disagreed with the link between test scores and economic success, citing empirical work by Murnane and Levy (1992) showing a limited connection between test scores and earnings

for workers and therefore a rush to adopt the policies of other educational systems should be treated with caution. Murnane and Levy (1992) conclude that the United States has had a relatively successful economy but was not near the top of any international educational comparison league table. Therefore the correlation between education and economic performance was not entirely clear or as simple as assumed by politicians in America. However, the direction of policy for both governments in England and Florida remains focussed on this assumption that increased test scores will achieve economic success.

1.8 Research question and sub-questions

As mentioned in 1.2, the main area of interest for my primary research question emerged out of my experience as a teacher and a parent engaged in teaching children to read. My position as a school teacher immersed me in the contested theories of reading pedagogy. Some teachers favoured the Whole Language approach using real books, whilst others valued the teaching the sub-skills such as phonics. As a primary teacher I had opportunity to examine the effects of a nationally promoted intervention strategy in England based on a phonics approach, compared with a Whole Language strategy in Florida. This study records the effects on results of ALS over a four-year period and ALL over a two-year period.

The study of practice, together with analysis of the outcomes, highlights the differences in approaches and articulates the discourse surrounding different pedagogical philosophies. Such thinking led to the development of the main research question:

What are the main differences between reading strategies in England and Florida?

This main research question is addressed by the observations and interviews conducted in England and Florida. The important context for the strategies is the commonality in policy to raise test

scores in both settings. The policies in England and Florida are not explicitly researched, but the literature surrounding the policy is examined in order to establish the context and expectations of the strategies which were promoted on a national and state level. The strategies of ALS and ALL which emerged from policy are evaluated in this study.

In order to evaluate the relative effectiveness of different reading strategies (ALL and ALS) as used in two different national contexts, I have broken down the main research question into three sub-questions which explore the relative effectiveness of ALS and ALL. According to Punch (2009) developing research questions often reflects the conceptual framework for the research. In the case of this research the sub-questions are concerned with two differing theories about the best way children learn to read, Whole Language theory as embodied in Accelerated Literacy Learning and Phonics–based tuition as demonstrated in Additional Literacy Support. The sub-questions are:

1. What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?

2. What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?

3. How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?

The three sub-questions listed above contribute to answering the main question of identifying the differences and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies in the following ways:

Sub-question 1 addresses the fundamental issue of the style of pedagogy used to teach a specific section of the school population in both settings.

These particular pupils have scored below average in test scores in each setting and have been identified as requiring intervention. The importance of the assumption that higher performance in test scores leads to a more effective workforce and a prosperous economy was outlined in 1.7. The significance of focussing on this particular group of pupils is that they are just below the average for their cohort and with an effective intervention strategy they could achieve a level commensurate with their peers. The improvement of test scores for this group would present a more positive demonstration of overall success in test scores as these pupils are on the tipping point between reporting success or failure. Strategies used to help below average pupils achieve above a particular pass mark, take on added significance when determining the success of a school and the policy of government.

Sub-question 2 addresses how well the two different strategies for reading affected the actual test scores recorded in both settings. The use and analysis of the numerical data was necessary for this study as the two differing strategies for the teaching of reading were employed to address the same issue of improving the test scores. Therefore their relative effectiveness of the strategies should also be demonstrated through their ability to improve results.

Sub-question 3 supports the analysis of test scores in sub-question 2 by examining factors which promoted or impeded the success of the two strategies. This question addresses why the strategy has been effective or not. The question also forms the basis for making recommendations for future strategies to promote effective reading and improve test scores.

Chapter Two reviews the literature which shaped the research design. It considers the contested theories surrounding what helps children to learn to read. Chapter Two also examines how Additional Literacy Support and Accelerated Literacy Learning evolved theoretically, historically and politically demonstrating the cross-national differences and similarities of policy and practice and issues of professionalism.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The main research question for this study evaluates two approaches to teaching children to read in the context of respective policies. Therefore the literature review will initially focus on the practice for the teaching of reading in sections 2.1 to 2.8 and conclude with the policy context in terms of the standards-based agenda common to both settings in sections 2.9 to 2.13. The first part of the literature review centres on the debate between the use of phonics and the use of Whole Language theory and examines the theoretical and philosophical basis for these approaches. This directly relates to sub-question 1: **What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?**

This chapter also discusses the criticisms of the two differing strategies for reading and continues by examining evaluations of seven other reading programmes. The seven programmes which have been used to improve reading scores employ different theoretical perspectives and are included as a comparison and a context to the two approaches (ALS and ALL) under scrutiny.

The way the evaluations of the seven programmes were conducted will be related to how the research was designed for this study. This chapter also looks at how the standards-based agenda has influenced policy in the two settings. Reviewing the various reading programmes provides an understanding of the debate surrounding practice for teaching reading. The literature review (2.7) outlines the effect of various strategies on test scores and examines what factors were felt to impede or promote effectiveness which directly relates to sub-question 3:

How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?

Literature review concerning practice

2.1 Phonics as the most effective way to teach children to read.

According to Ehri *et al* (2001), the theory which promotes phonics as the most effective way to teach children to read is based on letter-sound associations and how to use these associations to read words. Goouch and Lambirth (2011) suggest that using phonics as the main method of instruction for learning to read is based on a Cognitive Psychological Approach (CPA) as advocated by psychologists such as Chall (1983), Frith (1985) and Gough (1993). This theory asserts that children must be introduced to certain skills and knowledge of literacy at particular ages and the theory maintains that all children need to be taught to progress in similar ways. For cognitive psychologists, literacy is a discrete set of skills that can be learned and taught and can be transferred from one person to another (Goouch and Lambirth, 2011).

Ehri et al (2001) believe that when provided systematically, phonics instruction helps children learn to read more effectively than does non-systematic instruction or instruction without phonics. Research undertaken by Ehri *et al* (2001) claims that phonics benefits reading, spelling and comprehension in many readers, and the positive effects persist even after instruction ends. Specifically, phonics helps younger children who may be struggling to read to achieve higher grades in reading tests. Ehri *et al's* research indicates that systematic phonics instruction in small groups and classes contributes to higher reading outcomes and is as effective as one to one tutoring. Ehri's *et al's* view on phonics has particular pertinence to this study because according to Beard (1998) the approach to the teaching of reading promoted in ALS, and central to this study, was based on a systematic teaching of phonics. It involved: explicit phonics instruction through teaching in small steps, providing guidance during initial practice, low level questions that ensure a high proportion of correct responses and careful monitoring of progress (ALS, 1999).

According to Goouch and Lambirth (2011) The National Literacy Strategy (1998) and subsequent ALS (1999) were promoted by New Labour as being the best way to improve literacy. The theory underpinning teaching reading in the NLS was largely based on a phonics approach. To a lesser extent semantic and syntactic strategies were also regarded in the NLS as important first steps to reading and would enable children to learn to read quickly and efficiently. Goouch and Lambirth (2011) believe that this theory of teaching reading is a convenient strategy for governments who need to test pupils at specific ages to meet set targets. The methods of instruction used in English schools for teaching reading through phonics relies heavily on pupils recounting and chanting sounds together and taking part in phonic games (Goouch and Lambirth, 2011). Goouch and Lambirth believe that this CPA approach is related to the behaviourists' theory of leaning advocated by Skinner (1950) and an approach to reading which they regard as reductionist. An advantage of the reductionist view is that by breaking down phenomena to its constituent parts it may be possible to understand the whole. This theoretical approach of reductionism is applied to the teaching of reading through a predominant use of phonics (Goouch and Lambirth, 2011). Chew (1997:22) describes how phonics theory can encompass several styles of phonics teaching and catagorises the variety of phonics instruction as:

Analogy phonics: Teaching children unfamiliar words by analogy to known words.

Analytic phonics: Teaching children to analyse letter-sound relations in previously learned words to avoid pronouncing sounds in isolation

Embedded phonics: Teaching children phonics skills by embedding phonics instruction in text reading, a more implicit approach that relies to some extent on incidental learning.

Phonics through spelling: Teaching children to segment words into phonemes and to select letters for those phonemes.

Synthetic phonics: Teaching children explicitly to convert letters into sounds (phonemes) and then blend the sounds to form recognisable words.

2.2 Analytic and Synthetic Phonics

According to Jolliffe *et al* (2012) both analytic and synthetic phonics were included as the best way to teach reading in the NLS. Analytical phonics shows children whole words and then instructs them in how to break the words down into their component parts. Wyse and Styles (2007) suggest that this theory stresses the larger elements of words onset (part of the syllable before the first vowel) and rime (part of the syllable from the first vowel onwards) as well as phonemes. Analytical phonics methods stress that many single syllable words deviate from using one letter to stand for one vowel, for example the '**a'** in bat, bar or ball. In this case pupils would try to locate the sound of the '**a'** by looking at the letters that followed it.

However, according to Jolliffe *et al* (2012), synthetic phonics teaches a pupil to convert letters in to sounds and then blend the sounds into recognisable words. The sounds associated with the letters need to be isolated, pronounced and synthesised together in order to read the word. This method requires pupils to be able to segment the individual sounds (phonemes) within a word through careful hearing. Pupils would then need to be taught to merge the sounds together to pronounce the word. This process is called blending (Jolliffe *et al*, 2012).

According to Goouch and Lambirth (2011) the inclusion of analytic phonics in the NLS caused some disagreement because the NLS accompanying document 'Progression in Phonics' set out specific stages of phonic teaching including use of analytical phonics. Supporters of synthetic

phonics such as Johnston and Watson (2003) disapproved of analytical phonics claiming that synthetic phonics had a better effect on reading scores than analytical phonics. The basis for their argument was the Synthetic Phonics study in Clackmannanshire which claimed to have produced excellent results.

Support for Synthetic Phonics has strengthened even further following the use of ALS as examined in this study. Rose's *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading* in 2006 shows clear support for the teaching of phonics:

> 'High-quality, systematic phonic work as defined by the review should be taught discretely. The knowledge, skills and understanding that constitute high-quality phonic work should be taught as the prime approach in learning to read' (Rose 2006:12).

Rose's view that the approach to reading which emphasises phonics is the best way to teach children to read is cited in paragraph 51 of his report:

> 'The case for systematic phonic work is overwhelming and much strengthened by a synthetic approach, the key features of which are to teach beginner readers: grapheme/phoneme (letter/sound) correspondences (the alphabetic principle) in a clearly defined, incremental sequence to apply the highly important skill of blending (synthesizing) phonemes in order, all through a word to read it to apply the skills of segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to spell that blending and segmenting are reversible processes' (Rose, 2006:51).

According to Goouch and Lambirth (2011), phonics teaching in the form of 'Letters and Sounds' (DfES 2007), has dominated reading instruction in state schools following Rose's recommendations. Letters and Sounds (DfES 2007) teaches pupils to read in a prescribed and linear fashion in a six phase programme in Foundation stage and Key Stage 1.

In updating developments in the teaching of reading, the government in England required all primary schools to administer a phonics checklist in Year 1 from June 2012. The Department for Education has supplied universal guidance for administering the checklist and for interpreting and responding to the results. Secretary of State Michael Gove stated:

> 'We are determined to raise literacy standards in our schools, especially of those not achieving the expected level – a light-touch phonics-based check will provide reassurance that children in Year 1 have learned this important skill, will enable us to pinpoint those who are struggling at an early age and will give them the help they need before it is too late' (DfES standards site 2012).

The promotion of phonics as the main approach to teach reading has been supported by Rose in 'Phonics first and fast' which clearly endorses that phonics alone should be taught initially, and that teaching other strategies alongside phonics is not recommended.

Rose's Phonics 'first and fast' advises teachers to:

'apply phonic knowledge and skills as their first approach to reading and spelling even if a word is not completely phonically regular' (2006:11)

'children should not be expected to use strategies such as whole-word recognition and/or cues from context, grammar, or pictures' (2006:12).

This approach to teaching reading has been endorsed in the training of teacher completing QTS courses since 2009. Primary teaching trainees at some Universities in the U.K. are now required to teach phonics and show the impact of their teaching on pupil progress.

In March 2011 the U.K. Department of Education released its White paper entitled 'The Importance of Teaching'. In the Executive Summary, item 12 of the curriculum section states their commitment to support systematic synthetic phonics, as the best method for teaching reading.

The pertinence of the literature on phonics to this study lies in the effects of the phonics-based approach of ALS on test scores over a four-year period and identifying factors which are felt to impede or promote effectiveness (Research sub-question 3). The debate between analytical and synthetic phonics was also relevant at the time of this study as ALS contained both types of phonics teaching which were considered as equal in importance at the time. However more recent developments have promoted synthetic phonics as the British government's main strategy for teaching reading.

2.3 Phonemic Awareness

As the UK government have endorsed phonics as their strategy to teach reading, it follows that pupils must have an awareness of sound for this strategy to be successful. As outlined in 1.1 my own daughter struggled with phonemic awareness due to her hearing loss. This section will examine the phonemic awareness and its relevance to a phonics based reading strategy.

According to Hempenstall (1997) both USA and UK governments came to an increasing consensus on what they considered to be the most successful way of teaching children to read. The area most cited involves phonological processes, and particularly, phonemic awareness. Hempenstall argues that phonemic awareness is the ability to notice, think about, and work with

the individual sounds in words. Reviews by Hurford et al (1993), Coffey and Mann (1993) supported the idea that phonemic awareness was the most important factor in the teaching of reading. This view was supported by Adams (1991) who commented:

> 'To my mind the discovery and documentation of the importance of phonemic awareness is the single most powerful advance in the science and pedagogy of reading this century' (Adams,1991: 392).

A study by Stanovich (1986) defined phonemic awareness as the:

> 'conscious access to the phonemic level of the speech stream, and some ability to manipulate cognitively representations at this level' (Stanovich, 1986:362).

Stanovich used rhymes, alliteration and separation of sounds in a word to syllables and individual phonemes, to test his theory that phonological abilities are the most powerful predictors of reading success.

Adams (1990) agreed that phonemic awareness was the central factor in progress in reading rather than more general abilities such as intelligence, vocabulary, and listening comprehension. Adams argues that many children enter school with little phonemic awareness and so any type of reading tuition may be sufficient to encourage their phonemic awareness. However Adams adds that for a large number of pupils this process does not occur. The aim of phonics teaching is to make explicit to pupils the sound to letter principle.

According to Hempenstall (1997) the relationship between phonics and phonemic awareness is often misunderstood. Phonemic awareness is a listening skill that can exist without contact with print. At an advanced level, it involves the capacity to dissect the spoken word, and understand the resultant sound segments. However, until contact with the written word there is no communicative

value in developing such a skill, and many children do not naturally develop this capacity. When learning to read, the capacity to perform the phonemic operations becomes important.

Adams (1990) suggests that in order to develop an understanding of how units sound of represent units of print, children require some phonemic awareness. According to Beard (1998) this is exactly the scenario for the pupils selected for the ALS programme. Pupils engaged on the programme had not developed sufficient phonemic awareness to absorb all of the phonics taught in Years 1 and 2 in the National Literacy Strategy and therefore failed to score above level 2b in their Year 2 reading SATs. Children scoring below Level 2b were the recommended to be taught Additional Literacy Support in groups. Research by Palmer and Reason (2000) suggested that volume and frequency of sounds taught in Years 1 and 2 were too great for around half of the children that they tested because their phonemic awareness was not sophisticated enough to absorb them all.

Supporters of phonics such as Adams and Stanovich claim that reading is not a natural process. Adams (1990) suggests that high rate of illiteracy in the United States supports the notion that children do not develop naturally in to readers and schools cannot afford to assume that phonemic awareness will develop in all children solely through exposure to literature (Adams, 1990).

2. 4 Whole Language theory as the most effective way to teach children to read.

According to Goouch and Lambirth (2011) in contrast to the more behaviourist theories of learning to read underpinning phonics teaching described in 2.1, Whole Language theory takes a different view to the teaching of reading.

Bruner (1996) sees knowledge as the product of ‘making’. In Bruner’s view children acquire knowledge by reorganising what they already know about the world. Street (1991) describes this

approach as ‘constructivist’. According to Street, the constructivist theory applied to learning to read recognises that the process does not merely begin in school as some pupils have already had literacy experiences before schooling takes place. As children are exposed to print in the world around them, then many have already started to make sense of the written word. This theory of learning to read is in direct contrast to a standards driven approach as outlined in 2.10 and 2.11. Saracho and Spodek (1993) believe that children become emergent readers by their engagement in language activities both orally and in print. In this context learning to speak read and write is achieved through active participation in the world around them. One of the main supporters of Whole Language theory Kenneth Goodman believes that children have been surrounded by print from an early age and begin to respond to print relatively quickly as seen in play activities which include: looking at books, making cards for their parents and marking paper to represent notes to friends (Goodman, 1960). This theory of learning to read directly relates to my own experience of reading for meaning as outlined in Chapter 1.1, when I made the transition from ita to Standard English. My purpose for reading was to discover and enjoy facts and stories which interested me even when my decoding, through an ita phonetic decoding approach, was not applicable to the standard English of football programmes and comics which I was reading.

Goodman (1986) suggests that oral language is learnt by immersing a child in the world where language is naturally spoken and that written language is acquired in the same naturalistic way:

> ‘Written language is an extension of human language development that occurs when it is needed; when face- to -face and here- and -now language is no longer sufficient’ (1986:117).

Goodman argues that learning written language is natural because humans are a symbolic species and learn to think symbolically thus communicating through language in various ways. In this way

written language extends our capacity to communicate symbolically. Goodman believes that because oral and written language are symbolic ways of communication, then both are learned in similar ways. Geekie *et al* (1999) argue that the best way in which children learn to read depends on social practice in a meaningful interaction with the teacher.

This notion of learning to read as a co-constructive and child-centred experience is exemplified in approaches to reading as shown in 2.7b Comprehension skills for reading and 2.7f Reading Recovery.

2.5 Criticism of a phonics-based approach to the teaching of reading

Hannon (2000) believes that the arguments surrounding the best way to teach children to read have polarised educational debate for decades resulting in: 'absolutism' and 'dogmatism' (2000:71). Hannon justifies this statement through citing recent initiatives from central government in Britain over the past twenty years which have supported the move towards phonics based approach. Jolliffe (2012) believes that support for phonics is not just a matter of educational preference but also political interest. As mentioned in 2.2 phonics was promoted during the formation of the National Literacy Strategy and subsequent ALS by New Labour and now under the 2010 Coalition expectations for schools and teacher training have been clearly set out for systematic synthetic phonics to be taught (Jolliffe, 2012). The DfE have made phonics teaching a competency to achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS):

> 'When teaching early reading, demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic phonics' (DfE, 2001: para 3).

Phonics has also received focus from the US government in the form of the National Reading Panel which analysed the research in to the teaching of reading and concluded that:

> ‘Systematic phonics instruction proved to be universally effective, it should be implemented as part of literacy programs to teach beginning reading, as well as to prevent and remediate reading difficulties’ (NICHD, 2000:2).

Despite both British and American governments claiming that the research literature supports the use of phonics, Wyse and Goswami (2008) suggest that:

> ‘No reliable empirical evidence that synthetic phonics offers the vast majority of beginners the best route to becoming skilled readers’ (2008:691).

Wyse and Goswami argue that further research is required to justify the government’s insistence on a particular method of teaching reading.

However it was not always the position of the British government to support phonics. The Bullock report (1975) recommended that children should learn to read in context and not through precise teaching of phonics:

> ‘Language should be learnt in the course of using it in and about the daily experiences of the classroom and the home’ (1975:520).

The quotation represents support for a more Whole Language approach to reading. Criticism of a solely phonics-based method of instruction has been argued by Meek (1982) who claimed that phonics was popular as a teaching method because:

> ‘Insecure or inexperienced teachers find it one that they can both understand and administer’ (1982:74).

Meek (1987) believes that reading is a complex process based on several different kinds of knowledge and that learning to read involved drawing on all these different sources. Meek argues that by simply insisting that children use phoneme recognition skills to read would actually disadvantage pupils and mislead them about the complexities of the English Language. Meek

believes that government policy to move to a phonics only practice is leading to a reductionist approach to the teaching of reading which Meek describes as:

> 'A thinner gruel of educational nourishment' (Meek, 1987:8).

Meek believes that a phonics approach would disaffect pupils who did not see the advantage of learning sounds.

Goswami (2007) agrees with Meek and considers that using phonics as the core method for teaching reading gives teachers a distorted view of the complexity of learning to read because phonics appears a simple and efficient approach with letters and sounds which can be monitored by teachers when pupils have memorised them. Goouch and Lambirth (2011) also agree with Meek and suggest that narrow teaching of reading:

> 'Disarms children, misleads them about how the English language is represented symbolically and importantly misdirects them about the very nature of reading' (Goouch and Lambirth, 2011:6).

Meek (1987) claims that learning to read is based on the assumption that children are intentional learners, interested in making sense of the world and not based on the drill and practice of a phonics approach. Geekie *et al* (1999) argue that assumptions made by supporters of phonics claiming that children learn to read simply because they are taught through systematic phonics teaching is incorrect. Geekie *et al* believe that the best way in which children learn to read relies far more heavily on social practice in a meaningful interaction with others both inside and outside the classroom. Lambirth (2007) agrees with Geekie *et al* claiming that teachers need to learn from Geekie *et al's* view on learning rather than persevering with phonics-based schemes which Lambirth describes as:

> ‘A vulgar sheep dipping style where all children are provided with the same experiences’ (Lambirth, 2007:82).

Mullins *et al* (2006) argue that the British government is attracted to phonics because it appears efficient. Mullins’ criticism that phonics is used by politicians as a convenient solution to improving reading scores is supported by Goouch and Lambirth (2011), who suggest that:

> ‘Quick wins and efficiency, systematic approaches and incremental learning belong to the language of politics where short-term goals are important and easily measurable outcomes are the basis of popular headlines’ (Goouch and Lambirth, 2011:9).

Goouch and Lambirth also comment that phonics represent a teaching method which meets the current demand from governments with limited information, for simple solutions and easily measurable tests to improve reading scores. In this way the authors claim that government can benefit from:

> ‘Quick wins, easy targets and play on the parent’s emotions to gain rapid success for their children’ (Goouch and Lambirth, 2011:3).

Johnstone and Costello (2009) expand on this theme and claim that the business model processes started to appear accepted and unavoidable to practitioners in schools.

2.5 b Criticism of a Whole Language approach to the teaching of reading

As Whole Language theory became established as a credible alternative to phonics-based instruction, worries about the effectiveness of Whole Language theory became voiced. This section will examine some of the criticisms made of Whole Language theory in a chronological order.

One of the first critics of Whole Language theory was Rudolf Flesch (1955). In his book 'Why Johnny Can't Read'. Flesch claims that learning to read using Whole Language theory:

'flies in the face of all logic and common sense' because teachers had abandoned the alphabet code and taught children to read by guess work and memorisation' (Flesch, 1955:vii).

Jean Chall (1967) concluded in her work 'Learning to read: The great debate' that systematic teaching of phonics tended to produce better word recognition, spelling, vocabulary and comprehension in all children, than the use of Whole Language theory. She based her assumptions on having analysed twenty reading programs across 300 classrooms in three countries, and completing a review of the literature at that time.

Downing (1979) supports Chall's position, citing his British study which claimed that on the principle of one-to-one correspondence between letter and sound, that phonics instruction was more effective than a Whole Language approach and made learning to read easier.

Anderson *et al* (1985), in the United States report, 'Becoming a Nation of Readers' supported the use of phonics teaching claiming 'The trend of the data favours explicit phonics' (1985:42).

Following this report in 1986, the US Congress contracted Marilyn Jager Adams to write a book about the critical elements in teaching reading. Her book, 'Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print' (1990) compared studies from a variety of fields research including education, psychology, linguistics, neurology and physiology. Her book recommends early and sustained intervention using phonics and is critical of the concept of Whole Language theory for its lack of direction and for producing poor results.

Weir (1990) continued the criticism of both the concept and the practice of Whole Language theory which she argues led to an increase in illiteracy. Weir also claims that Whole Language theory tries to divert the blame for poor achievement in reading from the school to the home. She

believes that advocates of this approach have a responsibility to provide evidence of their more natural development of reading to justify the use of 'indirect process-oriented education' (Weir, 1990:32). Weir believes that advocates of Whole Language theory such as Smith and Goodman do not have an acceptable research base to support their theories.

Whole Language theory was also criticised for its apparent ineffectiveness when applied to at-risk students by Bateman (1991). Bateman argues that the whole-word emphasis, demonstrated in Whole Language theory classrooms, lacks explicitness of instruction in the alphabetic principle which is vital to learning to read for at-risk children. Research by Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, (1989) and Groff (1990) agree with Bateman and consider the notion of learning by discovery as: 'cavalier, and prejudicial to the progress of at-risk students' (Groff, 1990:82).

Henry (1993) argues that Whole Language theory's lack of clarity regarding phonics is detrimental to at-risk learners as they are the least likely to develop their own phonic generalisations which leaves them without a firm basis to attempt to read.

Moats (2007) claims that by the early nineties, the consensus amongst education policy makers was that Whole Language teaching had been a mistake:

> 'The failures of whole language are many, from failure to teach phonics and other language skills explicitly and systematically, to an overly personalised, nondirective approach to reading comprehension' (Moats, 2007:15).

Moats believes that for millions of children who struggle to learn to read, the results of using Whole Language theory are poor. Lyon (1997) supports Moats' argument claiming that explicit instruction in phonics is necessary to enable children to become capable readers. Lyon's claims are based on a study of 285 children from a poor socio-economic background in the United States. In Lyon's study pupils who were taught using a phonics-based approach were tested at ten percentage

points ahead of pupils taught in accordance with Whole Language theory on a reading-comprehension test. Lyon claims that these findings are true across race, socio-economic status, and family background.

Sections 2.4.and 2.5 of this chapter have outlined criticisms of both Whole Language theory and phonics, both claiming to have research findings to support their viewpoints. The next section examines the context for the settings and how one particular approach was promoted over the other.

2.6 Philosophical and political influences on ALS in England and ALL in Florida

In order to explore the practice for the teaching of reading in England and Florida, the differing underlying educational philosophies and political influences which support the programmes need to be examined. This is in order to provide the context for the actions of supporters of the different theories in their implementation of ALS in England and ALL in Florida.

2.6 a England

This section will outline the historical political manoeuvres which promoted the use of both systematic and testable use of phonics as well as Whole Language approaches to teaching reading at different times over the past fifty years in England. It will examine how Additional Literacy Support became the chosen vehicle to help below average pupils improve reading scores.

As mentioned in section 1.2, teaching of reading in England up to the 1960s was predominantly based around developing knowledge of phonics. Gillard (2007) commented that during the 1960s, The Plowden Report (1967) questioned the dominant philosophy of a knowledge-centred education system and advocated more of a child-centred philosophy.

In relation to the curriculum, the Plowden Report stated:

> 'One of the main educational tasks of the primary school is to build on and strengthen children's intrinsic interest in learning and lead them to learn for themselves ' (Plowden,1967:2).

According to Meek (1982), in the context of the competing theories of learning to read, the child-centred philosophy reflects more of a Whole Language approach to reading because it favours the interests and intrinsic curiosity of the child. Supporters of Whole Language theory such as Meek enabled the Whole Language approach of teaching reading to become more dominant as a vehicle to teach reading in the late1970s. Previously, according to Gillard (2007) a 'skill-and-drill' approach to phonics instruction had dominated the teaching of reading. Ross (2000) claimed that The Plowden Report (1967) started the process towards a more child-centred pedagogy.

As quoted in 1.3, by the mid-1970s Labour Prime minister James Callaghan began to question his own party's new progressivist approach to education in a speech in 1976 when he commented on child-centred teaching methods:

> 'On another aspect, there is the unease felt by parent and others about the new informal methods of teaching which seem to produce excellent results when they are in well-qualified hands but are much more dubious when they are not. …There is little wrong with the range and diversity of our courses. But is there sufficient thoroughness and depth in those required in after life to make a living?' (Callaghan, 1976: Speech at Ruskin House).

One could take the view that what Callaghan suggested in the comments above was a change in the pedagogy employed by teachers rather than an up-skilling process. Silcock (1997) describes how the political climate changed in Britain in the late seventies because, with Britain in economic decline, the effectiveness of teaching methods and the education system in general was being questioned. Bartlett and Burton (2007) argue that the Conservative Party in opposition had long

been supporters of a more knowledge–led approach to education. Seizing on the opinion that child-centred pedagogy was not producing high quality outcomes, the Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher called for a return to more traditional knowledge-led pedagogy. The Education Act 1981 formed by Thatcher's government requires:

> 'What is taught in schools, and the way it is taught, must appropriately reflect fundamental values in our society' (DES 1981:6 p 21).

Goouch and Lambirth (2011) argue that the different theories which have developed regarding the teaching of reading are intrinsically linked to the values and beliefs of the groups on opposing sides of a social and political argument. According to Gillard (2007) supporters of a traditional knowledge-led philosophy have enjoyed dominance in England over the past thirty years. The traditional philosophy described by Bartlett and Burton (2007) as 'Classical Humanism' places knowledge at the centre of learning with the teacher imparting the knowledge to a receptive pupil. In this context the individual needs to access the knowledge which society deems to be important (Bartlett and Burton, 2007). According to Bartlett and Burton (2007), the Education Reform Act of 1988 marked a move towards a market-based approach to education supported by the Neo-Liberal wing of the Conservative Party. Carr and Hartnett (1997) describe the climate for more traditional styles of teaching created by firstly the Conservative government then continued by New Labour presented educational policy such as the Literacy Hour as:

> 'unproblematic and self-evidently desirable' (Carr and Hartnett, 1997:23).

This move to a more traditional approach according to Carr and Hartnett indicated a shift away from more humanistic and egalitarian social democratic political ideology which had dominated Labour Party thinking during most of the 1960s and 1970s. The shift resulted in a more utilitarian

political ideology of Thatcherism with its emphasis on economic freedom, market forces and individualism (Carr and Hartnett, 1997).

Hill (2001) argues that New Labour continued with a similar ideology to the Conservatives, with a knowledge-led approach to learning and the shaping of the curriculum. Gillard (2005) believes that a traditional approach has been demonstrated in the government's priority in addressing basics skills of Literacy. The teaching of reading and writing was targeted across the country through the National Literacy Strategy which applied a class teaching approach to literacy with teachers following a strictly applied process of teaching devised for raising test scores in literacy.

New Labour's Literacy Hour and subsequent development of Additional Literacy Support presented practitioners and pupils with a structured body of knowledge and instruction in order to address the improvement of test scores Gillard (2005). This remediation strategy was for pupils who had not kept pace with the Literacy Hour's anticipated outcomes. Ross (2000) places the ALS style of programme in the traditional ideological delivery by stating that:

> 'Teacher decides on and gives access to knowledge which counts; ensures standards and transmits approved knowledge' (Ross, 2000:129).

The teaching described in the ALS handbook is what Ross describes as:

> 'Teacher guides students as to what to study' (Ross, 2000:129)

The teaching methods in the handbook include 'direction, demonstration, modelling, scaffolding, questioning, listening and responding' (ALS, 1999:7), which Bartlett and Burton (2007) identify as traits of a traditionalist approach. As Goouch and Lambirth (2011) argue that this traditional approach to reading is manifested clearly in the teaching approach of systematic phonics.

Bernstein (2003) believes that the education system in Britain is controlled by the beliefs and values of the middle classes. However, Bernstein suggests that there are fundamental tensions

within the middle classes. Bernstein argues that both progressive and traditional approaches to reading have their source in particular sections of the middle class. These particular sections represent wider political ideals and aspirations in their desires from an education system. Bernstein argues that the supporters of a traditional approach also support the notion of the economic market and have an interest in promoting the economic sector and entrepreneurial professions. They are sympathetic to a more instrumental approach to education through vocational routes.

In contrast Bernstein identifies another section of the middle class whose beliefs and values align themselves with more progressive educational ideology. This group are more opposed to market forces and support state controlled education and funding and advocate growth in public spending on education. Sadovnik (2001) agrees with Bernstein and adds that this progressive element of the middle class also want education to be less restricted from vocational considerations. Goodman's notion of 'The Reading Wars' is part of the tensions between these two middle class groups with the traditionalists supporting a phonics approach and the more progressive minded individuals supporting Whole Language theory.

Goouch and Lambirth (2011) argue that the approach taken to reading pedagogy is closely connected to the beliefs values and political ideology of an individual's view of what society ought to represent. So the aspirations for society and desired legacy are bound up in the values held by a particular group. Therefore as Goouch and Lambirth (2011) conclude with regards to approaches to reading:

> 'The answer to the question 'Who is right?' will be ideologically rooted in the socio-economic position of those who provide the answer' (2011:21).

Shannon (2000) believes that phonic programmes such as ALS 'demonstrate a growing efficiency movement in the teaching of reading which copies the model of industry in terms of the logic of

production' (2000:51). Shannon believes that this attitude pervades other modern capitalist countries and the reasoning for this attitude is that business requires all aspects of industry to be as predictable as possible in order to maximise profits. Therefore work is a rational process which discounts emotion and individuality. When applied to the process of teaching reading the two approaches of firstly the experience process- predict , question, connect and engage and secondly the reading strategies and skills of semantics syntax and grapho-phonic become unbalanced. Shannon argues that the technical skills have become more dominant because they are more aligned to a business model of efficiency which can be easily measured and reported.

2.6 b Florida

In considering the philosophical and political context for developments in teaching of reading in America, Walker and Soltis, (1992) suggest that the historical roots of the contested debate on approaches started over a hundred years ago with John Dewey.

Dewey saw classical humanism as too teacher-centred, and too concerned with existing knowledge fitting people into an existing society. However Dewey considered Liberal Humanism, as too student-centred, ignoring the importance of the social contexts of learning and development (Dewey, 1902). This led to Dewey developing a progressivist route which provides an alternative to Traditionalism and Liberal Humanism (Armitage, 1999). Walker and Soltis (1992) describe Dewey's own vision of democracy as the best way for people in a society to live together and for individuals to grow and develop. Dewey believed that schools should replicate democracy in an embryonic social community in which students were encouraged to cooperate and work together and learn from each other as well as from their teachers (Walker and Soltis, 1992).

Dewey believed that education was to extend the individual's powers and possibilities as human beings. So for Dewey the curriculum would be based around active problem-solving and be constructed of topics which interested and challenged students, with the aim that people would learn how to think for themselves and make decisions. Armitage (1999) describes how schools in the United States followed Dewey's lead and began to use progressivist methods of teaching and learning.

Ross (2000) defines the idea of a child-centred philosophy as having an emphasis on process. According to Ross (2000) process involves developing the skills of the individual as:

> 'acquiring the process of learning….rather than knowing what one should know, it is more about how one should know' (Ross, 2000:128).

Accelerated Literacy Learning as a Whole Language approach relates to progressivist pedagogy by being concerned with the development of the individual's reading skills and accelerating their individual progress (Wahl 2002). Brashears (2002) echoes this child-centred approach adopted by ALL as extending the reading skills of the students from their existing abilities and strengths. Lemann (1997) claims that as progressive education became influential in America, schools began to switch from traditional phonics instruction to a Whole Language approach. However in the twenty years leading up to this study the emphasis on teaching methods in the United States had changed to support a more traditional approach. Apple (2004) suggests that this change in direction was the work of an ideological power block in the United States which had been responsible for developments in reading policy. Apple proposes that this power block consisted of neo-conservative intellectuals committed to market-driven solutions to educational problems and wanted: 'a return to higher standards and a common culture' (Apple, 2004:16).

The values held by the neo-conservatives reinforced the position of America's National Reading Panel in its support for phonics. Pearson (2004) claims that phonics was considered by the NRP as an appropriate model for teaching reading which was easily testable and accountable. In the context of America's standards agenda, phonics appealed to the middle classes in America and was supported by policy makers in both the Clinton and George W Bush administrations. Lemann (1997) commented that the debate revolving around the most effective means of teaching reading became highly politicised. Adams (1997), a leading phonics supporter, contributed to the debate by commenting:

> 'How best to teach reading, may be the most politicised topic in the field of education' (Cited in Lemann 1997:6).

Lemann concludes that:

> 'Although many people are for phonics simply because they believe it works better, phonics is also a long-standing cause of the political right; in a number of communities it is one of the main organizing issues for the Christian Coalition. Whole Language is generally a cause of the left' (Lemann 1997:6).

In order to comply with policy to raise standards, each state in the US was given the directive to form standards to enable the progress of pupils to be measured (Pearson, 2004). In Florida the Sunshine State Standards were introduced as such a measure. However in addressing the standards agenda, educationalists in some districts of Florida opted for a Whole Language, student-centred approach rather than the phonics approach which was being promoted by central government at the time. As mentioned in Chapter 1.2, Pearson (2004) suggests that the principles which underpin ALL and Reading Recovery in America have served as a transmission device for Whole Language

theory. Brashears (2002) comments that child–centred pedagogy, as well as process and development of the individual, are evident in the ALL programme. ALL was developed in the University of South Florida by Homan and King for local children and was discussed in detail at local levels by teachers and District Instuctionalists. The decision of some districts to adopt a more Whole Language approach to the teaching of reading was contrary to the direction of the teaching of reading policy in many other US states (Wahl, 2002).

2.7 The use of reading intervention strategies for children below average expectations for their age.

The next section reviews other reading intervention strategies in order to establish a comparison of approaches to improving reading with pupils scoring below average in test scores. The review of these strategies and their perceived benefits informs the context of the deeper investigation in to Additional Literacy Support in England and Accelerated Literacy Learning in Florida.

According to the DfES report *Making Good Progress* (2002), in England, around one fifth of children experience literacy difficulties before the age of seven. This assumption is based on the results of National Curriculum assessments. A table from a study conducted by Brooks in 2002 gives the percentages of children not yet achieving level 2 in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 (age 7) or not yet achieving level 3 in English at Key Stage 2 (age 11) in 1998-2002.

Figure 1

Key Stage 2, 1998-2002 *

	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Year	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
1998	19%	7%
1999	17%	7%
2000	16%	6%
2001	16%	7%
2002	15%	7%

* excluding absent pupils (Brooks, 2002:3)

Figure 1 is pertinent to this study because the pupils not achieving level 3 in English at Key Stage 2 (age 11) are the same level of pupils included in this empirical study in England.

This section will look at a variety of approaches inherent in reading programmes being used with children of a similar age at the same time of this study. This section will clarify the content and perceived effectiveness of the programmes in terms of test scores, cost effectiveness and numbers engaged on the programmes. It will also include comments by critics of the strategies.

Reading programmes featured in sections 2.7 have been divided into the headings below:

a. Phonological skills for reading
b. Comprehension skills for reading
c. Partnership approaches for reading,
d. Large-scale programmes
e. Accelerated Literacy Learning
f. Reading Recovery
g. Additional Literacy Support

When considering the many types of intervention strategies used in England, The National Strategy's model of the three waves for teaching and intervention, most suitable in KS1 and KS2 are:

Wave One – the effective inclusion of all children in daily quality first teaching.

Wave two – additional interventions to enable children to work at age related expectations.

Wave Three: Specific targeted intervention for pupils identified as requiring SEN support. Brooks describes the pupils at wave three in these terms:

‘Pupils at Wave Three may have particular needs related specifically to literacy, or needs associated with other barriers to their learning. Provision at Wave Three is likely to draw on specialist advice. It may involve the adjustment of learning objectives and teaching styles, and/or individual support. It aims to reduce gaps in attainment and facilitate greater access to ‘Waves One or Two’ (Brooks, 2002:3).

The programmes covered in this section are a mixture of wave two and three initiatives.

2.7 a Phonological skills for reading

Phonological skills for reading have been the focus of a number of studies since 1995. In considering the programmes for reading at the time of this study, there were two well-used phonic based schemes: Phono-Graphix and Teaching Handwriting and Reading and Spelling Skills known as ‘THRASS’. These programmes gave explicit attention to grapheme-phoneme relationships within a broad framework. THRASS is examined below as a sample of a phonological skills approach to reading.

THRASS was a structured multi-sensory literacy programme with a strong synthetic phonics programme developed by Alan Davies of Manchester Metropolitan University. The programme has been developed and revised resulting in a computer version in 1997. Brooks (2002) describes THRASS as a phonic method of helping children "decode" which Davies believes to be an essential part of learning to read, but not the only part (Brooks, 2002:48). Davies (2003) suggests THRASS is a more logical and comprehensive phonic method than the traditional approach of linking one letter to one sound, the c-a-t approach.

Johnson (1995) views the principle behind THRASS as addressing the difficulty some pupils have in understanding grapheme-phoneme and phoneme-grapheme correspondences. Davies (2003)

considered that the problem many pupils have whilst learning to read is that there are forty four sounds or phonemes the English language, but only twenty six letters of the alphabet to represent them. Davies believes that the best approach to teach reading is for pupils to be taught about the variety of these phonemes in English.

Davies argues that THRASS is a most effective model for the teaching of reading. Davies cites research by Emmit and Pollock (2002) who claim that in order to help learners develop appropriate phonic knowledge, the teacher, must have accurate, explicit knowledge of these relationships. Emmit and Pollock believe that learners are given misleading information when being taught to read which clearly does not assist their learning and often creates confusion.

Davies (2003) built on this research to develop THRASS. A THRASS lesson would include discreet teaching on upper and lower case letters by name, and writing each letter while listening to verbal instructions. Pupils are introduced to common sequences such as days of the week or months of the year. During each lesson new learning is introduced but there is always practice of material already covered. Children are encouraged to work together whilst the teacher provides positive encouragement and reinforcement for correct responses.

THRASS has been used extensively in England, Africa and Australia. Evaluations of the scheme by Johnson (1995) concluded that the programme was favourable showing improved reading scores in Year 2 SATs results. Brooks (2002) also reviewed the programme and agreed that the favourable support for the programme focuses on its use with the whole class. However, Brooks found little evidence of the value of the scheme as a 'catching-up' intervention. Further research of the programme as a remediation intervention programme has been carried out in the Special Initiative to Enhance Literacy Skills in Bridgend. This was conducted with pupils in Years 3-6 in 1998. In this research, reading and spelling were assessed. The results showed considerable

impact on reading for all year groups, and on spelling in Year 3, but not on spelling in Years 4-6, where the children made progress commensurate with their peers.

However, not all reviews of THRASS are favourable. Sharp (2007) has some reservations about the THRASS programme. The most common concern for Sharp is that THRASS is only as good as the teacher delivering it and its success will depend on how well it is taught. Sharp's other criticism is that THRASS deals with phoneme/grapheme association and children with auditory discrimination difficulties may find differences between some sounds difficult to pinpoint. Different accents will also have an influence on determining the correct sounds for example a teacher with a different accent from the children may give a different sound for some patterns and may not match the children's pronunciation.

2.7 b Comprehension skills for reading

The area of comprehension skills for reading has included some research undertaken in England. However, most quantitative studies on how to improve comprehension skills have been conducted outside the UK. In the United States, Rosenshine and Meister (1994) completed an analysis of comprehension skills in randomised controlled trials. They found a satisfactory effect size in favour of working on comprehension skills for reading improvement.

Brooks (2002) indicates that some children read accurately, in the sense of decoding fluently, but appear not to understand much of what they have read. There are various programmes which address this issue such as Paired Reading, Phono-Graphix and THRASS. These are highly structured schemes which have targeted comprehension. The next page examines Paired Reading, as a sample of a comprehension skills approach to reading.

Paired Reading was a popular approach to reading with pupils who were struggling with comprehension skills at the time of this study. It was a simple and direct approach devised by Morgan (1976) to meet the needs of children who were finding reading difficult. It could be delivered by teachers or teaching assistants. Topping and Lindsay (1992), described Paired Reading as a scaffolding approach in which tutor and child begin by reading aloud together, and the tutor gradually withdraws and leaves the child to read aloud alone. Paired Reading specifies techniques for intervening when the pupil makes a mistake. This happens if the learner stumbles over a word. When this happens, the tutor keeps reading and encourages the pupil to continue without pause. If the pupil loses his or her place, the tutor waits for the pupil to catch up. If the learner is reading confidently and accurately, then the teacher fades their voice to a quieter volume (Topping and Lindsay, 1992). According to Topping, the purpose of this technique is to encourage fluency confidence and comprehension when reading. It will also stop the disruption to flow caused by a learner struggling to decode words or waiting to be corrected and this approach encourages reading for pleasure (Topping and Lindsay, 1992). Topping and Lindsay (1992) reviewed dozens of studies from across the English-speaking world over a four-year period and concluded that the results consistently demonstrated that the technique was effective.

However there were critics of Paired Reading who disputed the results. Swinson (1996) referred to studies by Grigg (1984) and Wareing (1985) which found no significant difference in reading ability of pupils who experienced a shared reading approach with a simple listening approach. Swinson (1996) argued that the improvements in reading were down to other factors such as the amount of reading delay suffered by the pupils, the age at which parental involvement is encouraged and the length of the project.

2.7c. Partnership approaches for reading.

There have been a variety of partnership approaches to reading in recent years. The general label 'Partnership Schemes' suggested by Brooks (2002) refers to programmes in which children who are poorer readers are tutored one-to-one, or in small groups.

Brooks describes The 'Catch Up Project' as a notable example of a partnership approach developed in conjunction with Oxford Brookes University. Catch Up is an intensive intervention program for children with reading difficulties. Originally the Catch Up Project was targeted at children who achieved level 1 in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 (Brooks, 2002).

Clipson-Boyles (2000) viewed the project as practically designed to be delivered by Year 3 teachers in a few minutes per child per week. A ten minute session offers a structured framework in which a tailored programme is taught to each pupil. The framework adopts a broad-based approach teaching a range of skills, strategies and concepts, including phonological knowledge (visual and aural), sight recognition of high frequency words, cueing strategies, and the links between reading and writing (Clipson-Boyles, 2000).

Brooks (2002) describes a Catch-Up session beginning with the 'Prepared Reading Approach', a procedure developed by the Catch Up team from an earlier study by Bentley and Reid (1995). The Prepared Reading Approach focuses on reading for meaning. Next the pupil is observed by the teacher whilst he or she reads. The teacher observes and records any miscues, and links this with a writing activity. Brooks (2002) claims that these methods are based on research from different sources, such as Gardiner (1965) and Huxford, McGonagle and Warren (1997). Clipson-Boyles (2000) comments that a high emphasis is also placed upon positive reinforcement and praising pupils for specific improvements. The 'Catch Up Project' also relies on providing poorer readers with substantially increased time for reading (Clipson-Boyles, 2000).

Brooks (2002) evaluation of 'Catch Up' revealed evidence for its effectiveness. He reported that most of the recorded gains in test scores following the use of Catch Up were substantial. By 2001-02 'Catch Up' was being implemented in about 3,000 schools in England supporting children in Years 1-4. However Brooks (2002) comments that in the National Experimental Study of 2001, the gains in test scores were not as pronounced. Brooks suggests that this may have been because the scheme was less firmly supported with the schools in the national experimental study.

The comparison of 'Catch Up' with the two programmes in this study is relevant as it is directed at Year 3 pupils. It also serves as an indicator of relative success of another type of intervention strategy.

2.7d Large-scale programmes

At the same time as the two programmes compared in this study, there were notably four Large-scale programmes for reading being used in England. They were: Family Literacy, Phono-Graphix, Reading Intervention, and Reading Recovery. As Reading Recovery will be discussed in the next section of the literature review, this section will be focussing on Family Literacy as an example of a large scale programme. Family Literacy ran in Cardiff, Tyneside, Liverpool and Norfolk in more deprived socio-economic areas. The main area for comparison in this study is between two approaches to deal with below average attainment. Family Literacy was also targeting this group of children by focusing on the family context.

Kellet (2007) at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation suggested that often children who encounter difficulties when learning to read come from homes where their parents struggle with reading too. The programme targeted families which schools considered in need of greatest help (Kellet, 2007). Brooks comments:

> ‘The parents were often poorly qualified and not employed outside the home’ (Brooks, 2002:58).

This generational cycle of underachievement is well documented and highlighted in the Skills for Life report of 2001 entitled ‘The National Strategy for Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills’ which states:

> ‘Parents with poor literacy and numeracy skills are more likely to have children with similar difficulties’ (DfEE, 2001: 29).

Brooks (2002) describes how the programme allowed any parent of a child aged between three and six years to join the course with their child. The course was twelve weeks in total. There were two separate sessions, one session for children and one session for parents. This was followed by a final session together. In the parents’ sessions, the parents worked on their own literacy skills towards a certificate for their achievements in how best to help their children. The children’s sessions were a mixture of nursery and infant school practices and approaches. During the joint sessions, the parents worked with their own children, applying the new techniques learnt previously in their own session (Brooks, 2002).

Brooks (2002) reports that ‘Family Literacy’ achieved some success in terms of test score data. He cites an evaluation of the success of Family Literacy conducted by a team at the National Foundation for Educational Research (1995). The report considered the test data on the children’s reading attainment. All children aged five on entry to the course were given the Reading Recognition subtest of the Peabody Individual Achievement Tests (PIAT). The same group of children were re-tested on the PIAT at three points: twelve weeks, nine months and thirty four months after the end of the intervention. The pre-test showed the children as disadvantaged and at great risk of educational failure. During the courses, they made an average gain of over 4

standardised score points, and the educational outlook for many of them was improved (Brooks, 2002).

A replication of the Basic Skills Agency demonstration programme was conducted in Hampshire and evaluated by Stepien (1996-97) with a small sample of twenty seven families. In Stepien's 1997 study the impact seemed even more powerful than in the Demonstration Programmes.

Rose (2007) in a review of Family Literacy reported that the most frequently mentioned benefit was increased confidence in the mothers' ability to help their child with their schoolwork. Rose also reported the perceived benefits as mothers' attendance at school strengthened the bond of relationship between parent and child. At the same time, it gave out positive messages about learning to the children:

> 'Thus, it created the optimum conditions for the child's educational growth and fostered a positive habitus towards education and learning' (Rose, 2007:259).

In Rose's study, mothers in Herefordshire noticed an improvement in the literacy skills of their children. However, Rose comments that whilst such reported improvements are encouraging, it is difficult to establish if they are a direct result of the family literacy intervention or simply a part of the child's natural development (Rose, 2007).

2.7e Accelerated Literacy Learning

This study will examine the teaching of reading for below average children in Florida. The programme featured in some districts in the state is Accelerated Literacy Learning.

Wahl (2002) describes how pupils who do fall into the just below average category, against set criteria in literacy, are given an intense acceleration programme targeting the needs of the individual and delivered by class teachers who have attended specialist training courses. The process is called Accelerated Literacy Learning and has been developed at the University of

Central Florida by Homan and King (2002). Accelerated Literacy Learning is an early intervention programme for first graders (six to seven year olds) performing in the lowest 20th percentile or their class in reading and writing.

Accelerated Literacy Learning was originally designed for a one to one instruction basis where the child would be extracted from the main class and taught by a reading specialist. The aim was to serve the below average child whilst the class teacher taught the rest of the class. The children targeted with Accelerated Literacy Learning are often a year or more behind their peers in terms of a reading age (Wahl, 2002).

Wahl (2002) indicates that training for Accelerated Literacy Learning is fundamental to effective delivery and success of the programme because of the bespoke nature of the intervention to adapt to the needs of the pupils. The Accelerated Literacy Learning training consists of two semesters in which the teachers learn about detailed observation. Observation is shown through video recording of children encountering a variety of reading problems. Elementary Instructionalists and other trained teachers then discuss good practice and how to address particular reading problems. Teachers then analyse each other's work while observing videos of their own lessons. They are also taught the concept of 'scaffolded learning'. Following the first year of training the teachers return for a once a month two-hour training session called 'veteran's training' (Wahl, 2002).

Brashears (2002) describes teacher training for Accelerated Literacy Learning as follows:

1. Scaffolded instruction is the essence of Accelerated Literacy Learning. Through a series of prompts, reminders, clues and encouragement, teachers directly structure the learning so that in classic Vygotskian style the child is brought from the known to the unknown.
2. Teachers are taught about research-based practices and theories of instruction and cognition.

3. In order for the teachers to become experienced decision-makers and observers of students, they teach children whilst they are receiving the training.
4. An experienced tutor observes lessons and gives detailed feedback to the teacher.
5. Lesson plans are analysed and acted upon where needed.
6. All segments of the reading lesson must be linked with the focal point of the lesson.
7. A clinical forum is arranged as part of the training and is a chance for teachers to bring any particular issues or problems to one of their sessions and discuss it with other teachers and their instructor. (The teachers consult each other and brainstorm a plan that may alleviate the problem)
8. Problems are analysed according to the assessment the teacher has on the child.
9. Teachers also learn behaviour management techniques to facilitate the smooth running of the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme and to focus on the literacy problem.
10. Teachers are taught appropriate learning strategies to tackle the various types of problems that occur with reading.
11. Reading processes and cueing systems are also part of the training.
12. Book levelling and how to create academically focused literacy centres in the classroom and the wider school is also addressed.
13. Running record keeping is also an important part of the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme, and so these are checked by the instructor during the course and feedback given.
14. How to administer the diagnostic survey for the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme is also included in the training.

(Adapted from Brashears *et al* 2002:11)

Wahl reports that Accelerated Literacy Learning has been used successfully, as a vehicle to meet the 'Sunshine State Standards' in Florida and has been monitored and evaluated by the independent Florida Centre for Reading Research. The programme was evaluated as improving both short term test scores and reading ability in the longer term. Florida Centre for Reading Research rated Accelerated Literacy Learning as:

'Successful with no obvious negative effects' (Wahl, 2002:32).

Brashears (2000) agrees that the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme has been successful in terms of producing good results in reading efficiency but acknowledges that the programme is more costly than others. King and Homan (2002) commented that they based Accelerated Literacy Learning on Marie Clay's Reading Recovery. Wahl (2002) noted that Accelerated Literacy Learning contains similarities to Reading Recovery. Whilst examining Accelerated Literacy Learning, it is necessary to look at its theory and roots in Reading Recovery because this will establish the educational context of this particular approach.

2.7 f Reading Recovery

Jenkin and Goss (2001) commented that Reading Recovery is an early intervention programme, to help low achieving six year olds learn to read and that Reading Recovery provides an alternative to traditional reading practices for educationally disadvantaged and learning-disabled students.

Rigby (2002) claims that Reading Recovery works by increasing the reading skills of children falling behind their peers or finding basic reading overly problematic. It provides intensive, individual help for any children who have not responded to classroom teaching and mainly targets six to seven year old children. Reading Recovery arose out of an extensive programme of research and development carried out by Marie Clay at University of Auckland. The project began in New

Zealand schools in 1978 and since 1983 has been implemented on a national scale there. It was introduced to USA and U.K in 1991 and now operates in many other countries around the world (Rigby, 2002).

Dinner (1993) describes the difference in approaches to the teaching of reading as the beginning of reading instruction can be a contentious issue. Dinner believes there are those who support intensive phonics instruction and others who advocate the Whole Language approach. Dinner suggests that while Reading Recovery is considered more akin to a Whole Language approach, it combines extensive teacher education, with a development of phonological awareness and the use of contextual information to assist reading.

According to Sensenbaugh (1994) Reading Recovery seems to offer the lowest achieving 20% of six-year-olds an effective method of reading and writing instruction. This allows the teacher to develop the pupil from their own starting point. Reading Recovery addresses the needs of the individual by looking out for the problems they are encountering in their reading and providing a bespoke plan to improve the reading of the individual pupil.

Pollock (1994) describes Reading Recovery as offering daily one-to-one tutorial session for six to seven year olds who are having difficulty learning how to read after a year of formal teaching. The programme is supplementary and short term, with most children having from twelve to twenty weeks of instruction before they are successfully discontinued from the programme. Pollock (1994) describes Reading Recovery as providing children with particular reading difficulties with a period of intensive individual help in the form of daily half-hour sessions with a specially trained Reading Recovery teacher. The lesson itself consists of looking at two or more books, letter identification, making and breaking words, establishing meaning, comprehension and writing a story (Pollock, 1994).

However Rigby (2001) claims that Reading Recovery is not solely concerned with improving children's reading and writing skills. The term 'Recovery' implies the objective of helping children acquire efficient patterns of learning, which enable them to work at the same level of their classmates by the end of their supplementary programme. This helps the children who experience the programme to continue to progress at a rate commensurate with their peers.

Clay's theory of learning to read (1985) is based upon the idea that children construct cognitive systems to understand the world and to understand language. These cognitive systems develop as self-extending systems to generate further learning through the use of multiple sources of information. The focus is on comprehending messages in reading and constructing messages in writing. Clay believes that highest priority should be given to children reading many books and writing their own texts. In this way children learn to attend to the detail of print without losing the focus on the meaning (Clay, 1985).

According to Jenkin and Goss, (2005) Reading Recovery has proved to be a successful intervention programme. To support their claim they cite The Institute of Education's 2005 study of Reading Recovery in six LEAs, which showed that children on the programme made significantly greater progress than children who received an alternative treatment such as phonological intervention (Evaluation of Reading Recovery in London Schools: Every Child a Reader 2005–2006). The study looked at 292 of the lowest achieving six-year-olds in 42 London schools over one school year. Researchers compared the reading progress of 87 children on the Reading Recovery programme with other children. After twelve weeks, the Reading Recovery group had caught up with their classmates and had increased their reading ages by twenty months (Jenkin and Goss, 2001).

Brooks' study (2002) concluded that Reading Recovery was effective, but relatively expensive, due to the cost of teacher training and the cost of individual tuition for the children involved (Brooks, 2002). However research by Schweinhart *et al*, (1993) in the U.S suggests that every dollar spent on early intervention saved seven dollars on social remediation later (Schweinhart *et al*, 1993).

Research in the U.K. by Wright (1992) concluded that the cost of Reading Recovery in Surrey of £600 was a relatively low amount when compared with over £15,000 required for a Statement of Special Educational Needs resulting support over many years. Similarly, Hurry and Sylva (1998) suggested that, although Reading Recovery is expensive at the point of delivery when averaged out over a five-year period the cost of support for Reading Recovery children was only 10 per cent more than the cost of learning support which schools normally provide (Hurry and Sylva 1998).

2.7 g Additional Literacy Support

The Additional Literacy Support programme is aimed at pupils scoring below 2C in KS1 SATs in England. ALS was a remediation programme designed to revisit phonics taught in the National Literacy Strategy which had not been retained by pupils. Beard (1998) describes the Literacy Hour as a systematic approach to the teaching of literacy. The Literacy Hour consisted of strict timings on a four section format: shared reading (fifteen minutes), word, sentence or text level work (fifteen minutes) guided reading (twenty minutes) and plenary (ten minutes).

Barber (1999) describes Additional Literacy Support as a modular programme, designed to be delivered by teaching assistants. Bunn (2008:215) adds that the lessons were planned in detail with 'little scope to vary their content of pace'.

The teaching assistants had received specific training from Local Education Authorities in the delivery of the Additional Literacy Support material. The training of the teaching assistants in the schools in this study consisted of two days of instruction. The first was taken with the class teacher present and the second day involved only the classroom assistants who delivered the programme. The first course was to familiarise the teachers and their classroom assistants with the content of the module booklets going through the modules one by one and explaining the terms used in the lesson plans. The second course was a returning session where the teaching assistants discussed any problems with the lessons contained in the programme module handbook with the literacy consultants from the local authority.

The Government's green paper *Teachers meeting the challenge of change* (2000) welcomed the more influential role of teaching assistants and stated the Government's intention to fund 20,000 additional classroom assistants. As part of this drive in 2000 to employ more teaching assistants, the Additional Literacy Support programme was to provide classroom assistants with:

> 'A structured programme, with teaching resources and some training to ensure that classroom assistants are well supported as they deliver the programme' (ALS,1999 Module 4:12).

The policy for teaching assistants to help deliver Additional Literacy Support recommended that time would be allocated for them to meet and plan with teachers. The hours of employment for classroom assistants in this study were limited and they finished work at four o'clock which limited their engagement with the teachers in the proposed Additional Literacy Support training. This was a policy requirement set out in the introduction to the modules (ALS: pp 12) which was not entirely imposed by the schools in the study as the class teachers involved had not been sent on the local education authority training.

Children were assessed at the start of Year 3 to see at which point they should enter the Additional Literacy Support programme. Initially this was done by using the SATs scores for reading in Key Stage 1 and then followed by a test to establish which of the four modules the children would start on (ALS, 1999).

Bunn (2008) commented that the ALS material was directed at revising areas of the National Literacy Strategy, which has not been successful with the pupils. ALS attempts to develop simple all-round literacy skills linking the reading phonic skills and word recognition with the process of recall in a prescribed set of spelling goals. The Additional Literacy Support module handbook determines that pupils are shown strategies to decode text in a systematic process. The trainer-led process requires the children to apply themselves to a previously set agenda and then go through a process which will enable them to apply their skills to new texts. Once the module has been delivered the children will then be retested before moving on to the next module. If the child is unsuccessful then the module can be repeated (ALS, 1999).

Two published evaluations of Additional Literacy Support have been by Bunn (2008) which evaluated the effectiveness of Additional Literacy Support in terms of cost and results over a year long period and by OFTED (2009) which inspected intervention programmes linked to national strategies in a small scale research project.

The research into Additional Literacy Support by Bunn (2008) claims that the programme is as effective as other intervention strategies reviewed in Brooks' 2002 study of twenty five intervention strategies. Bunn (2008) claims that Additional Literacy Support is a cost effective programme compared to other intervention strategies. Bunn asserts that 'Additional Literacy Support is three times as efficient as the other main types of help for reading' (Bunn, 2008:223).

In the OFSTED report (2009) inspectors saw effective work in intervention strategies such as Additional Literacy Support but also saw work where the impact on pupils' progress was no better than satisfactory. OFSTED (2009) cited that the key determinant for success was detailed preparation, training and knowledge of those responsible for putting the intervention into practice. However, not all the Additional Literacy Support small-group interventions were successful. The common weaknesses were: insufficient timely and accurate identification of intervention for pupils and insufficiently specific planning to meet pupils' particular needs (OFSTED, 2009). The main area of weakness of the programme recorded in the report was teaching assistants' lack of subject knowledge and confidence to adapt sessions according to pupils' understanding, resulting in an unhelpful reliance on the detail of a particular programme and too little flexibility' (OFSTED, 2009:24).

2.8 How the literature informs the research design

In planning the research design for this investigation, the studies mentioned in 2.7 have influenced its direction in order to address the main research question: **What are the main differences between reading strategies in England and Florida?**

By reviewing the literature of how other studies have been conducted, the approaches used to study Whole language theory and phonics contain some commonalities listed below:

1. Individual case studies
2. Ages of the pupils
3. Dividing samples into groups
4. Longitudinal studies
5. Testing to start programmes and retesting at the end of programmes

1. Individual case studies

In regards to individual case studies, all of the studies in 2.7 were of single programmes and their effects on reading scores. Therefore in terms of this research, the effects of ALS and ALL have been evaluated as individual case studies which follow the same set of procedures and use the same methods. The two case studies have then been compared and discussed.

Section 2.7 has influenced the design of this study (to address sub question 2**: What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?** because the use test scores was evident in the case studies of all the reading programmes in 2.7. This case study also uses test scores because the very use of ALS and ALL has been determined by the performance of pupils on previous tests and by the desire of government to improve the pupils' test scores within a specified time limit.

2. Ages of the pupils

All of the studies outlined in 2.7 were conducted with pupils ranging in ages between six and ten. Initially the programmes focused on six to seven year olds and then monitored the effects in future years. This study also examines pupils between the ages of six and seven which has been identified by all the programmes in 2.7 as a crucial age for reading development. This study also reports on the longer term effects of ALL and ALS after the pupils have finished the intervention programmes.

3. Dividing samples into groups

There were commonalities in the studies outlined in 2.7 which mirror the approach taken by Special Initiative to Enhance Literacy Skills (1998) in their study in to THRASS. In order to confirm Davies' claim for the effectiveness of THASS they selected 65 students with low phonemic awareness scores who were then assigned to either a training group, or a non-training group. The children were re-assessed at the end of the project. This study has acted in the same way in order to promote equity in evaluating the effectiveness of the two programmes being investigated. Both ALS and ALL programmes in this study compared results between similar ability pupils who received the programme and those who did not. This is because one could argue that the progress of a particular pupil could have been advanced or decreased with or without intervention. Having two groups of similar ability and only one receiving reading intervention allows for a more credible evaluation of the featured reading strategies.

4. Longitudinal studies

In the 2.7 (d) study of large scale projects the research took place over four years in order to establish the lasting effect of strategies to improve reading test scores. In this study both programmes have targeted pupils experiencing difficulties in reading and attempts to evaluate which approach is more useful with these particular pupils in the long term.

The idea of a longitudinal study would be particularly pertinent to this research as ALS was introduced at Year Three with the intentions of pupils achieving Level 4 in reading by Year Six which would be over a four- year period. This study reports the effects of ALS on test scores from

Year Three through to Year Six. This study also reports on the effects of ALL over a two-year period.

5. Testing to start programmes and retesting at the end of programmes

Sub-question 2 of this research is to find out: **What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?**

In the large scale project 2.7(d) all pupils were selected for the intervention strategies following basic testing in reading. In this research all pupils were tested in both settings to determine whether they took part in the two programmes.

In 2.7(b) Comprehension Skills for reading, Topping and Lindsay (1992) reviewed research over a four-year period which involved the original experimental and control groups being retested four years after the training was completed. This research method of testing the control groups after a given time period following the programme has also been adopted by this study in terms of ALS (2 years after finishing the programme) and ALL (1 year after finishing the programme) in order to determine the long term effects of the programmes.

Literature Review concerning context of policy

2.9 Standards agenda policy formation in England and Florida.

This section of the Literature Review provides the context for the use of the two different approaches to reading employed in England and Florida at the time of this study and addresses the main research question: **What are the main differences between reading strategies in England and Florida?**

This section outlines the how the main purpose of policy relating to the reading strategies employed in both Florida and England was to improve test scores in reading in order to meet agreed targets set by government in both settings. In doing so this section also addresses the context for sub question 2: **What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?**

In England the policy for reading was to ensure 80% of 11 year olds achieved level 4 by 2002. The vehicle of policy to achieve this aim was Additional Literacy Support. Barber (1999:5) states: 'ALS reinforces the long term aim……to reach level 4'.

In a similar agenda, policy aims in Florida are linked to the Sunshine State Standards (appendix 10) which all pupils are required to meet with regards to a standard set for their age in each school year (Florida DoE, 2002). The Department of Education in Florida requires that policy in Florida follows the No Child Left Behind agenda and demands that schools demonstrate required standards of performance on the Florida FCAT tests (Florida DoE, 2002).

Smith (2005) argues that the emergence of sophisticated international comparison tests such as 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA) has led to international comparison with nations to compare the performance of their students with other countries. According to Smith this has led to both British and American governments to justify dissatisfaction with their school systems claiming that academic standards were too low and that students were failing. Smith believes that the rise in test scores satisfies the political parties in demonstrating the improvement to the electorate and raising their position in league tables of international comparison. Hulme (2008) suggests that supranational themes including the pursuit of economic competitiveness have been evident in the policies in the United States and United Kingdom. As explained in1.7 the assumption that raising educational standards is linked to improvement in

economic competitiveness is held by both British and American governments. Based on the historical information outlined in1.7 it appears that New Labour embarked on their standards-led agenda in the late nineties. According to Sammons (2009) raising standards of achievement is seen by policy makers as fundamental to sustaining economic performance and the promotion of democratic engagement. Education reform has become a central political issue as national governments implement programmes of reform to change their education systems and make schools more effective in responding to their investment through student achievement levels. Sammons argues that international surveys of student achievement such PIRLS, TIMSS and PISA are considered as most important for governments with the creation of ranked league tables of country results. Sammons believes that they have become increasingly influential with governments concerned with boosting their average attainment levels (Sammons, 2007).

Orfield (2000) agrees with Sammons' argument that the emphasis on statistical evidence of tests scores has dominated the concept of progress in both settings. Orfield suggests that policies concerned with testing, accountability and market driven systems of school choice have emerged. Smith (2005) claims that systems of high stakes testing such as those epitomized by the No Child Left Behind legislation have been implemented to attempt to raise test scores and propel nations up the international comparison league table.

The next two sections will review literature which summarises the historical and political basis for the standards based agenda.

2.10 Historical and political context for results driven policy in England and criticisms of the policy.

Gillard (2005) considers that standards-led reforms in education in England have been a feature of the British education system since the introduction of the Education Reform Act of 1988. This observation can be evidenced in New Labour's 1997 White Paper '*Excellence in schools.'* In The Guardian (27 June 1997) Journalist and author Decca Aitkenhead commented on the white paper claiming:

> 'A successful school will be measured above all by reference to a set of GCSE results.' What sort of teachers will the successful school employ? They will 'apply the strictest traditional teaching methods and grind good exam results out year after year' (Aitkenhead, Guardian, 27 June 1997).

When New Labour started to implement their standards-led agenda, it was exemplified by the National Literacy Strategy in 1998. Beard (1998) commented that when the National Literacy Strategy was implemented, the main strands of policy were target-led. The first aim of New Labour, as stated earlier, was to achieve a national target of 80% of all 11 year olds reaching level 4 in English SATs by 2002.

The results-led policy agenda in England has direct implications for this study. This is because the improvement in the scores of a group of children who had the potential to improve the test score average could have particular political significance. Children involved in the Additional Literacy Support were pupils who fell just below the average for standards expected nationally for children of their age. Beard (1998) commented that the specific teaching methods in relation to the children receiving Additional Literacy Support are significant because they would directly affect the 80%

level 4 by 2002 policy goal. Beard comments that careful attention has been taken of the aspects of the programme, which are particularly designed to help the type of child who may have fallen behind their peers.

Gillborn and Youdell (2000) comment that by strategically diverting resources targeted at a particular group, more children are likely to achieve the government's target. Achieving 80% Level 4 SATs targets would give credibility to New Labour's policy, proving its success to the electorate. Gillard (2001) believes that policy was presented to the public as a 'common sense' agenda for improvement by the simple use of test scores.

Carr and Hartnett (1997) criticised the results-led approach because they believed it reinforced the belief that:

> 'educational policy can be determined, explained and defended by a pragmatic appeal to ordinary common sense and what everybody knows'(1997:3).

Carr and Hartnett also argue that government direct imposition of policy on practice often de-professionalised teachers and divided intellectual engagement within educational debate.

> 'One of the sure signs of the 1990s is the way in which any informed or enlightened educational thinking is derided as 'mere theorising' that flies in the face of ordinary common sense. In many ways we seem to be witnessing the successful attempt, to deintellectuallise education discussion and debate' (Carr and Hartnett, 1997: 2).

2.11 Historical and political context for standards based agenda in the United States

De Bray (2006) suggests that the initial inclusive thinking for the standards based agenda started in 1989 at the Charlottesville Governor's Summit. At the summit, six national education goals were adopted and a 'National Educational Goals Panel' was created to monitor progress towards these

goals (De Bray, 2006). In the early 1990s the Office of Educational Research and Improvement began to develop standards in Literacy and other curricular subjects in order to define the educational goals (De Bray, 2006).

Bracey (1998) describes that by 2000, the 'America 2000' policy demanded that all states must work to implement the National Educational Goals which the federal government had funded and disseminated. The Clinton Administration (1993-2001) had a plan to pass education initiatives that supported the standards-based reform agenda. The policy would directly impose an audit culture and affect practice in the form of the checks and balances made to ensure accomplishments of standards in reading and other areas of the curriculum. This policy was known as Title 1 (De Bray, 2006). The America 2000 policy demanded that all states must work to implement the National Educational Goals which were standards set out clearly for states to implement as illustrated in the following extracts from National Educational Goals 2000 (2000:1, 3& 5)

> By the year 2000, all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages…. (2001:1) The academic performance of all students at the elementary and secondary level will increase significantly in every quartile…..(2000:3)The percentage of all students who demonstrate the ability to reason, solve problems, apply knowledge, and write and communicate effectively will increase substantially (NEG, 2000:5).

The National Educational Goals 2000 were later superseded by the No Child Left Behind legislation. De Bray (2006) comments that NCLB supports the standards agenda which is based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education. The Act requires individual states to develop assessments in basic skills

such as reading to be given to pupils at all grades in order for those states to receive Federal funding for schools. The Act does not contain national achievement standards but requires standards to be set by each individual state. Bracey (1998) describes how policy makers in Florida shifted the emphasis of their literacy programmes from inputs to outcomes. Instead of general schemes to improve reading, the emphasis was now on ensuring test scores were improved and overall percentages of children were reaching required levels achieved. The district authorities were required to ensure that schools had in place programmes to improve the pupils' performance in test scores. One such programme was Accelerated Literacy Learning which was outlined in 2.7. This was aimed at the pupils not reaching the required levels to meet the 'Sunshine State Standards'. By improving the scores of these children the overall percentage would be greatly improved (Wahl, 2002).

Apple (2004) commented that US Conservatives were worried about secularity and the preservation of their own traditions. The more professionally oriented new middle class in America were more persuaded by the ideology and techniques of accountability, measurement, and management. The overall aim of these groups is to provide the educational conditions believed necessary for increasing international competitiveness (Apple, 2000, 2001a). De Bray (2006) remarks that this approach advocated market reform, parental choice and a lesser federal role and was often referred to as 'The Standards Agenda'. De Bray (2006) comments that Bush continued the standards- based reform work and strengthened the Federal role in schooling. This led to the No Child Left Behind policy which was a continuation of the standards-based reform movement. Bush had a particular emphasis on literacy in his standards-based agenda remarking in 2002:

*"*We have a genuine national crisis. More and more, we are divided into two nations. One that reads and one that doesn't. One that dreams and one that doesn't." (Bush, 2002 cited in Smith, 2005: 30).

2.11a Criticisms of policy in the United States.

De Bray (2006) comments that the 'No Child Left Behind' policy adopted during the Bush administration has had a dramatic effect on the policy and practice of reading in Florida in the requirement of policy to develop quantifiable standards. This led to the development of Sunshine State Standards (Florida Department of Education, 2005).

Kaestle (2006) comments on how the implications for reading became apparent when this more aggressive stance of Federal government defined:

> 'When students should be tested, what method of instruction should be used how underperformance is defined and what the consequences for underperformance are' (in De Dray, 2006: 12).

The NCLB policy in the United States demanded that average scores for literacy should be reported. American researchers such as Bracey (1998) have criticised the reporting of average scores particularly for a country the size of the United States, where average scores mask important differences in the distribution of marks, particularly where there is a relatively large group of low scoring students. According to Smith (2005), trying to differentiate the impact of variables specific to a certain area is ignored by using the average as a chosen measure. This is of particular importance in Florida where the school population has one of the highest rates of

fluctuation during any academic year due to the children of transitory migrant workers entering and leaving schools in the state at regular intervals.

Smith (2005) criticises the reliance on test scores because she believes that the evidence for declines in the national standards in American schools is fundamentally flawed and can obscure a more fundamental problem, notably the differential achievement of subgroups of students. Smith concludes that the gaps in achievement are between children from minority ethnic backgrounds compared to children from the majority white ethnic group backgrounds (Smith, 2005). This has particular pertinence for the standards policy in Florida because of the high levels of transitory working migrants who enter and exit the state on a regular basis. This can often lead to disruption in schooling for the children and difficulty in producing accurate indications of their progress. Many of these migrants have English as a second language. A report by Leon Bouvier (2001) demographic advisor to the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Population, describes the effects of this population change on schools.

> 'Because Florida's high immigration rate means that population growth often exceeds projections, school enrolment projections (the basis of the state's funding formula) frequently underestimate actual enrolments, leaving school districts scrambling to provide additional personnel and programs without fresh infusions of cash. Last year, policy makers discovered they needed an extra $500 million to pay for an enrolment that exceeded projections by tens of thousands of students. Many had left by the end of the academic year only to be replaced by a new wave of migrant workers and their children' (Bouvier, 2001:4).

Efforts to improve the scores of this cohort would have a dramatic effect on overall test scores reported to the public and would be central to the results collected for this study. De Bray (2006) agrees with Smith and argues that the standards-led agenda in American education favours the more affluent middle classes. Consequently De Bray concurs that despite the funding for the initiative named 'Title 1', the gap in reading ability between students in poverty and other more advantaged pupils has remained.

Smith (2005) develops her analysis of the standards-led agenda by citing scores on NEAP tests in America as favouring the more middle class white students. This was reflected in the highest test scores of any ethnic group. This was acknowledged in the analysis by the Florida Department of Education Report on the 2002 FCAT tests which led to further targeted funding at schools in more socially deprived ethnic minority areas (Florida DoE, 2002). Wahl (2002) comments that the way the state used this funding in Florida was to include literacy programmes to target the children who fell below the required Sunshine State Standard. Some of these children lived in the more deprived areas of the state and are involved in the Accelerated Literacy Learning Programme. Wahl (2002) supports the use of the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme as a suitable vehicle to address Sunshine State Standards policy because it identified the specific problem of transitory pupils in the state and supported a group of children who were behind the average reading levels of their peers.

2.12 Policy targeting of pupils of below average attainment .

The targeting of below average pupils exemplified by Additional Literacy Support in England and Accelerated Literacy Learning in Florida has been the source of discussion by various commentators. Gillborn and Youdell's study '*Rationing Education'* (2000) details the overt and

hidden effects of target driven policies undertaken in America and England. These effects include pressuring schools to constantly show increased achievement scores on standardised tests. Schools are required to publicly display results and are threatened with severe sanctions or loss of control if they do not show improvement in test scores. Gillborn and Youdell (2000:42) describe this is as the 'A-C economy'.

Gillborn and Youdell (2000) argue that in both the United States and England, schools exist in a hierarchical system which relies on prestige and reputation. They are often valued by the number of pupils that pass prescribed tests. Results are made public in the form of league tables in which schools are ranked according to their relative success. According to Gillborn and Youdell schools with large numbers of students getting grades A-C are more highly valued than schools with inferior results. Gillborn and Youdell (2000) argue that results do not seem to take into account any other factors such as poverty, culture, social changes or location. The A-C economy would include the small group of children targeted by Additional Literacy Support and Accelerated Literacy Learning because using Gillborn and Youdell's assumption, improvements for these pupils would be critical in tipping the balance to determine the success or failure of the teaching strategy for the whole year cohort.

Apple (2000) acknowledges Gillborn and Youdell's argument about poverty and explains that much more of the variance in school achievement is due to poverty rather than any policy or school reform. Apple believes that this situation creates an economy where students with higher test scores are seen as more valuable than students with lower test scores because of the overall percentages publicly reported. As Apple comments:

> ‘Therefore a key group of students who are focused on and on whom considerable resources and attention is devoted are the students who are on the border between passing grades and failing grades’ (Apple, 2000: 27).

The students, whom Apple describes, would fall into the group examined in this study. Moving this important group in to the A-C grade category would make school’s results more positive to report. This group of children are central to this research as these are precisely the children targeted by Additional Literacy Support in England and Accelerated Literacy Learning in Florida as they would be pivotal factors when reporting results to the public in terms of percentage increases or decreases.

Gillborn and Youdell (2000) have some criticism of the approach of policy for these particular pupils in an A-C economy because they believe that specific pupils are seen as moveable. In contrast other students’ abilities are seen as increasingly fixed and less worthy of attention. Gillborn and Youdell maintain that these pupils are not valued commodities in this kind of market and therefore can be at risk of being ignored.

Smith (2005) argues that the school systems in the United States and England have followed similar patterns with perceptions of falling scores and underachievement on domestic and international assessments being coupled with economic insecurity. Smith believes that this has resulted in programmes of standards-led reform that are linked heavily to school accountability with the emphasis on test scores as tangible proof of improvements. Smith claims that government policy makers in England and Florida have used this argument to justify their competence to manage improvement (Smith 2005).

2.13 Literature review conclusion

After examining the literature in the field of study connected with the main research question, I am mindful of the purpose of this investigation which is to evaluate the relative effectiveness of two different reading strategies (ALL and ALS) for children scoring below average in reading test scores. The literature revealed that each side of the 'Reading Wars' debate claimed to have positive research to add credibility to their claims that their approach to reading is most effective. The debate raises a main question for this study:

What are the main differences between reading strategies in England and Florida?

This main question is about identifying the differences in practice in the two chosen settings. The context for the difference in practice relates to the commonality of policy to raise scores on reading tests as identified in 2.9.

The literature review has also influenced the framing of the sub-questions.

Sub-question 1 addresses practice: **What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?**

Sub-question 2 addresses outcomes: **What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?**

Sub-question 3 addresses the mitigating circumstances which may affect the relative success of the approaches to reading: **How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?**

The literature review (2.7.) highlights the use of numerical data in evaluating the effectiveness of reading programmes. Sub-question 2 evaluates the effect of these strategies on test scores over four years in England and two years in Florida. **What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?** The question considers whether a Whole

Language approach is effective (ALL) in raising scores on reading tests or whether the phonics based approach (ALS) was the most effective way to ensure that all pupils achieved level 4 SATs in reading. The policy background in the literature review (2.9 to 2.12) serves as a context for the debate on effective reading strategies as governments decide on which reading strategies to promote using a range of factors including cost, efficiency and effect on test scores. As numerical data is used by governments, policy makers and schools to evaluate the effectiveness of reading strategies then this study has also collected the test score data relating to ALS and ALL. This study contributes to research on reading strategies by tracking test scores over a significant period and by commenting on notions of effectiveness assumed by policy makers. This research may also contribute to a body of knowledge which may influence future policy on usage of particular strategies.

The third sub-question**: What factors are felt to impede or promote effectiveness?** evaluates how well the strategies worked in practice. The reports on the effectiveness of Additional Literacy Support outlined in 2.7 by Bunn (2008) and OFSTED (2009) are useful for this study as a point of reference as they highlight possible factors which may impede or promote effectiveness. Similarly the report by Wahl (2002) on Accelerated Literacy Learning is a useful comparison for the findings in this study in Chapter 4. This study adds to the body of knowledge about intervention strategies by reporting on practice and outcomes from an independent viewpoint rather than the perspective of an inspection. It also serves to challenge or confirm Bunn's findings but focuses largely on effectiveness in raising test scores rather than financial cost as examined in Bunn's study. In terms of ALL, the literature available to review which was specific to this particular programme was limited. This study enhances the range of evaluative studies in to ALL with observations interviews and additional test score data taken two years after Wahl's initial study.

In addressing the question of how this research will be original whilst still reflecting the literature reviewed, there are several differences to illustrate the debate between Whole Language theory and phonics in the context of this study. Firstly the comparative study of twenty five strategies by Brooks in 2002, cited in the literature review, was comprehensive but did not include an international evaluation whereas this study examines strategies in England and Florida. Secondly the work of Bunn (2008) reported on a one year period whilst this study has tracked Additional Literacy Support with a cohort of children over a four year period. Thirdly the OFSTED (2009) report compares a variety of intervention strategies but does not distinguish them in terms of pedagogical approaches of Whole Language theory and a phonics based approach. This study will provide a detailed comparison of two specific reading interventions, one of which is predominantly Whole Language (ALL) and the other which is phonics (ALS).

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Justification for methodological approach based on the research literature

The theoretical framework for this study is the evaluation of two strategies for the teaching of reading exemplified in a phonics based approach of ALS and a Whole Language approach represented in ALL. As illustrated in the previous chapter 2.1 and 2.4, both theories have supporters which claim that either a phonics model based on a behaviourist theory or a Whole Language model based on a constructivist theory is the best way to teach reading. As stated in 2.1 supporters of phonics instruction such as Adams (1990) believe that the most effective way to teach children to read is based on letter-sound associations and how to use these associations to read words. Alternatively the approach to reading known as Whole Language theory as stated in 2.4 supports the notion that children become emergent readers by their engagement in language activities both orally and in print. In this context learning to speak read and write is achieved through active participation in the world around them.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the two theories on teaching children to read, the methodological approach chosen is a comparative case study of the effects of ALS (Phonics) in England and ALL (Whole Language theory) in Florida. The justification for employing case study methodology as an appropriate vehicle to conduct this study is based on many other similar evaluative case studies as illustrated in 2.7. Case Study has been used successfully as a standard tool of inquiry in educational research over many years. Alexander (2003) made use of case study methodology in 'Culture and Pedagogy' which employed a mainly qualitative approach to evaluate and compare programmes in place in five different countries including Britain and America. The

main research techniques used by Alexander were ethnographic. Qualitative methods consisted of non-participant observation of lessons and in-depth and semi-structured interviews with teachers which proved to be effective in interpreting practice in the five settings. Bruner describe Alexander's approach as:

> 'Rich analyses of classroom discourse illustrate the subtle ways culture and teaching come together as pedagogy' (Bruner, 2002: Culture and Pedagogy sleeve).

Research studies by Brooks (2002) and Osborn (2003) consisted of both quantitative and qualitative methods in case studies. Large studies such as Brooks (2002) made use of quantitative data which was generally collected by assessing learner literacy levels using established tests, before and after the intervention.

The mixed methods approach has been used in this study to produce an evaluation of the use of ALS and ALL. The study has limitations in terms of number of schools and observations. However by using comparative case study methodology this research contains a depth of information which triangulates the findings.

3.2 Methodological approach: Case Study fitness for purpose

This research is a comparative case study because it examines two approaches to the teaching of reading on an individual case study basis using the same methods in order that comparisons can be made. In referring to the methodological approach in this thesis as a 'case study', I would like to define exactly what I consider makes this investigation a case study. This case study is the evaluation of the process of how reading is taught as viewed by competing pedagogies in two settings at one particular time. In this instance, the cases examined are exposed in order to give insight into the use of the two differing theories of learning to read in what Punch (2005) describes

as an ‘instrumental’ case study (2005:144). In this scenario a case study was an appropriate vehicle to examine practice in two settings because the study was able to observe effects as Cohen and Manion (2000) remark ‘in a real context’ (2000:9) by using observations, interviews and test scores. This would be an appropriate methodology given the main research question **(What are the main differences between reading strategies in England and Florida?)** as observing and interviewing practitioners delivering the strategies as examples of a particular case would enable me to analyse differences.

By adopting ethnographical approaches to the research I was able to participate in the daily lives and routines of the teachers and teaching assistants in schools in both settings. I was able to watch class lessons, group sessions and individuals being taught. I could listen to what was said, and ask informal questions. Case studies outlined in 3.1 involved multiple sources of data which provided an opportunity for the intensive analysis of the details of what the reading strategies entailed and whether or not they were effective. This intensive approach would be difficult to achieve without the use of case study as methodology.

When evaluating the two approaches to reading, I needed to outline the process. Yin (1984) calls this a ‘descriptive approach’. This would allow me to provide more narrative accounts of the effects of the reading programmes and the experiences of the individuals involved in them. The case study model allowed me to make evaluations of practice in different schools in different countries. It also gave me the opportunity to examine how the schools had understood, interpreted and implemented policy with their pupils which resulted in a particular practice (Ball, 1990). This would address the main research question: **What are the main differences between reading strategies in England and Florida?**

After reading the above literature and the research outlined in it in 2,1, I felt that the most beneficial way of answering both the main and subsidiary research questions was to use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. Therefore both settings were investigated using observations, interviews and an analysis of test score data. Such methods have also been used in the field by previous researchers such as Topping and Lindsay (1992), Stepien (1996-97) and Brooks (2002), for conducting case studies regarding literacy. I believed that comparative case study was the best methodology to use to address this study because it allowed me to gain insight into two different education systems. Whilst working within the limitation of a case study, the methods of observations, interviews and analysis of test scores were appropriate given the scale of the study and my restrictions of time, funding, access and being a lone researcher. Whilst this comparative study is too small to make generalisations, it is focussed enough by using the same methods to demonstrate an alternative viewpoint on the teaching of reading from two settings and contribute to the knowledge about teaching and learning with regards to reading strategies. Case study also allowed flexibility of approach to observe and interview different individuals within the same school and seek their views on their approaches to reading. Through case study I attempted to portray what it was like to be in a particular situation and to capture the reality of the participants in what Geertz (1973:34) describes as 'thick description'.

Case study methodology in this respect satisfied the three main components of the qualitative research aspect in *describing, understanding and explaining* practice (Yin 1994*).* Only by *describing* the features of practice would I be able to distinguish the salient differences in the approaches to teaching reading. This links directly to sub-question 1: **What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?**

Following the observations I was able to deepen the *understanding* of the practices with a series of semi-structured interviews which provided the practitioners with the opportunity to clarify their methods. This addressed sub-question 3: **How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?**

In the findings chapter, I have *explained* how the strategies have been used by the practitioners and recorded the effects of the practice on test scores. This case study approach enabled me to address the second sub-question: **What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?**

I have included the use of reading test scores to triangulate the data from observations and interviews in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes.

In keeping with other case studies mentioned in 3.1, this case study evaluates the effectiveness of the two reading approaches in depth. The case studies are conducted in their natural setting recognising the complexity and content of the reading approaches and the individuals involved in delivery of the strategies as well as the effect on the recipients (Punch, 2005).

3.3 Potential difficulties of using a case study approach

According to Punch (2005) one of the major criticisms of case study is that the case being studied is so unique that is cannot be generalised. When research is confined to a limited group of individuals, findings can be perceived as only being applicable to that place and time. In this respect I acknowledge the limitations in the size of this study but the schools selected for the study were typically middle ranking in comparative test scores for their locality and middle ranking in socio-economic terms. There appeared to be no significant variables which would marginalize the settings for this study. Also the subject matter of strategies for reading being investigated has

endured numerous previous studies. However, in defense of the above scenario, Stake (1995) argues that due to the in-depth nature of case studies:

'certain activities or problems or responses will come up again and again' (Stake, 1995:7).

These activities, problems and responses allow the researcher to make generalisations on a theme, which can then be refined through further investigation. The aim of this case study is not necessarily just to produce generalisations but to consider practice in depth illuminating key points and raising issues which may add to the body of knowledge which policy makers could refer to as useful information to inform future developments.

Another point of criticism relating to case studies is that they can be subjective by relying too heavily on individual interpretation. Often interpretation can be seen as too subjective and based on too small a sample. Therefore, critics of case studies such as Miles (1979) felt by that they were not a scientifically robust method of data collection or analysis. However, Stake believes that:

'A good case study is patient, reflective and willing to see another view' (Stake, 1995: 12).

Stake comments that as long as the researcher is aware of the above issues, there is no reason why case studies cannot be an effective method of research. I have therefore endeavoured to approach this study with an open mind.

There have been issues of conflict in educational research and social science between what styles of methodology produces a more forceful argument. Cohen *et al* (2000) claim that positivists, such as Comte in the nineteenth century, prefer the use of quantitative data believing that it leads to scientifically robust conclusions. Cohen *et al* (2000) conclude that positivists test theories through universal laws, so that outcomes could be generalised. Cohen *et al's* interpretation of Comte is that data needed to be quantifiable to make sure it was credible; as they claim Comte saw qualitative methodology as less reliable and unable to be generalised. This is because qualitative

methods are phenomenological and thematic so emerge from events as they unfold. Therefore they are descriptive and open to interpretation, unlike empirical evidence which is thought to be more reliable and difficult to manipulate.

In terms of this study the reading strategies used in both settings were employed because they would help increase test scores. Therefore it was appropriate for me to engage in quantitative methods in order to collate and analyse the quantitative date of the two groups of pupils who were involved in sitting the tests. As the tests were seen as the outcome of the teaching, I needed to see the style of pedagogy which was used to address the issue of raising test scores. I also needed to speak to practitioners to understand how they delivered and interpreted their teaching in order to improve the test score results. This would address Cohen *et al's* concern of in terms of Comptian positivism, with regards to qualitative methods being open to interpretation, as the observations, interviews and test scores triangulate the evidence and leave the results less open to interpretation. Taking these criticisms into account, this study has used a mixture of approaches both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative methods of interviews and observations provided contextualisation. Quantitative data in the form of test scores from each case study area had been gathered to allow for triangulation and verification of the effect of the two approaches to the teaching of reading. The case study allowed a mixed methods approach of examining the quantitative data to be used in the light of the individual circumstances in the schools studied. I was then able to use more qualitative methods to evaluate the reading theories which led to the test scores because as Reichardt and Cook comment:

> 'Quite simply, researchers cannot benefit from the use of numbers if they do not know, in common sense words what the numbers mean' (1979:23).

I used the quantitative data for the measurement of input and output of the children entering and exiting the programmes, and qualitative research to interview and observe the programmes. This use of a mixed methods approach in the context of case study enabled me to address the first two sub-questions: **1. What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?**

2. What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?

Within the case study framework I used a variety of methods to assist me in answering the research question including:

- Examining the criteria for pupil selection for additional help with reading based on test scores.
- Observing the strategies in place for the targeted group of children.
- Examining success criteria for continuation of cessation of either programme.
- Examining materials used to teach the children involved in the programmes.
- Use of semi structured interviews to talk to the individuals delivering the programme
- Use of graphs and charts recording any progress made by children in sample groups over a period of time. (Florida 2 years, England 4 years)

My justification for the use of these methods is that case study research often employs different kinds of data collection: interviews, observations and documentation. This suited my research questions because I was able to reflect in ethnographic terms on the use of statistical data to justify the implementation of a particular programme with particular children.

The data allowed me to balance the statistical information against quotations from interviews and descriptions of practice. This helped build a narrative description in Chapter 4 of the research. I intend that this narrative description as Hammersley (1990:44) describes will 'Tell the Story'

3.4 Discussion of relative principals of comparative education research informing methodology: Borrowing, Prediction and Analysis

As this research takes place in two different countries then there are some basic principles of comparative educational research which are pertinent to this study. The three stages of comparative education; *borrowing, predicting and analysis* require discussion because both styles of reading intervention programme have evolved through research in other countries before being implemented in their own. Wilson (2003) argues that *borrowing* involves the systematic cataloguing of information of educational systems and practices:

> '…in order to make available the best practices of one country for transplantation to others' (cited in Bereday, 1964:7).

Prediction involves *predicting* the probable success of a given educational system in one country, founded on observations of how it had performed in other countries.

Analysis involves systematic examination of the educational practices of one culture before predicting its outcome in another.

In terms of *borrowing*, studies by Clay in New Zealand which led to 'Reading Recovery' have been 'borrowed' by Homan and King (2000) in Florida and adapted the suit the perceived needs of the pupils in the locality through the ALL programme. Clay's research was developed and trialled over three years. Field trials conducted in five schools in 1978 were replicated the following year in forty-eight Auckland schools**.** This extensive trial was well documented to enable other English speaking countries to replicate the programme.

In terms of phonics Beard cites the work of Adams in America as evidence of the success of a phonics approach which could be borrowed and used in the NLS. This study has compiled

information from observations, interviews and test scores to evaluate the effect of the competing theories as represented by ALS and ALL. This study has compiled the test results of children involved in ALS over a four-year period to establish the longer lasting effects of the use of a phonics-based strategy. It has also tracked the effects of ALL over a two-year period to establish the longer lasting effects of the use of a Whole Language based strategy. Such information could be used by practitioners in order to suggest whether these practices could be promoted as the most effective way to teach reading in another setting.

In terms of the research methods in this study, borrowing was used within the parameters of a case study in the way that the observations, interviews and compilation of test score data were systematically recorded to describe the educational systems and practices in order for a comparison of practice to be made. By using case study methods I was able to present recommendations for future practice which could be borrowed by either setting to inform their teaching. It would be possible for future researchers to review the results of this research which describes practice through observations, and to understand further how the practitioners adapted and developed their teaching to suit the needs of the learner through their responses in interviews about their practice. They would also be able to see the impact of different styles of pedagogy on reading test scores over a sustained period of time.

In terms of *predicting* the probable success of the competing pedagogies being able to be transferred to each setting, it is worth noting that as mentioned in 2.1 and 2.4 both Whole Language theory and phonics have been utilised in both settings at various times in their history which has polarised opinion. As mentioned in 2.5 critics of phonics such as Goodman would predict that relying solely on phonics would disadvantage young readers in terms of understanding meaning and so transferring the strategy would not be beneficial to another setting. Goodman

bases his judgement on his own studies in reading comprehension, claiming that meaning was the essential component of reading and that children taught using phonics did not score as highly on comprehension tests than children taught through Whole Language theory.

Similarly critics of Whole Language theory such as Bateman (1990) as mentioned in 2.6 would predict that it would lack explicitness of instruction in the alphabetic principle which is vital to learning to read for at-risk children and therefore not useful to transfer to another setting. By evaluating the effectiveness of the two approaches, this study aims to add to the body of knowledge which would help clarify the effectiveness of the approaches for policy makers in both settings. This would enable any predictions of success of the approaches to become more accurate. In terms of the research methods in this study, predicting was used within the parameters of a case study in the way that observations and interviews regarding pedagogy would triangulate with test score data. For example, a teaching strategy which was more heavily influenced by reading for meaning would be more likely to produce good comprehension scores whereas a strategy which was more phonics based may produce better results in accuracy at word level. The research methods of observations, interviews and test scores could be used in order to indicate the probable success of a particular reading strategy in one country, founded on the research of how it had performed in another country. These recommendations are reported in 6.6.

In terms of *analysis*, this study has evaluated the use of both approaches in their respective settings in order to try to clarify strengths and weaknesses of the programmes and whether lessons can be learned before governments embark on any further educational developments.

For Wilson (2003) comparative research in education inevitably has implications for education policy makers. However, according to Alexander (2002) only substantial research would help with any decision making in using a successful scheme in another setting.

Alexander (2002) identifies two broad domains in international education comparison. The first of these he views as academic research, which may indeed have applications to policy and practice. However, its principal aspiration is the accumulation and refinement of knowledge. The second domain Alexander identifies is policy-directed international education comparison. This originates in the policy context and has policy problems and policy solutions as its principle focus. Alexander comments that academic comparative education risks abstraction and marginalisation, whereas policy directed international education comparison risks appropriation. As Alexander concludes:

> 'The first is not likely to be taken seriously enough; the second is likely to be taken more seriously than it warrants' (2002: 40).

This research in this study falls into academic comparative research. It identifies the different pedagogical approaches to a similar policy goal of raising test scores in literacy.

Osborn (2003) suggests that the international world, which promotes a knowledge economy, has policy makers concerned with educational systems. These systems produce human capital. This has led in some way to the replication of policies which appear to be effective from one country to the next. Smith (2005) sees another perspective to this type of policy suggesting that unproven systems of testing coupled with punitive accountability measures can do much to distort the achievements of schools. Smith argues that a consequence of international comparison is that nations such as United States and Britain who occupy mid-table positions in international rankings look to other more successful countries for lessons in educational reform that can be replicated. However Smith also maintains that it is unrealistic to transplant one successful educational initiative from one country to the next without paying particular attention to the educational and social contexts. Smith concludes that it is also premature to label schools as failing simply on the basis of test scores (Smith, 2005).

Osborn (2003) also questions the wisdom in adopting or replicating policy ideas from other settings and suggests that the influence of a particular national and cultural setting needs to be given more attention in order to see the policy in context. Osborn believes that the success of the policy depends greatly on the context in which it is delivered.

Baker (2000) believes that countries must look beyond simple rankings and avoid quick-fix solutions to perceived shortcomings in national school systems. Baker argues that nations should instead focus on understanding the variables such as curriculum and resources and their impact on student attainment and warns against direct borrowing of policies and practices between nations on the basis of social and cultural differences making translation problematic. The implications for this study are that the two approaches to reading have already been tried in both settings, so policy makers have knowledge of their effects. This study serves to evaluate the choice the policy makers have made in both settings, compared to alternative approaches available and inform future decisions on effective programmes to teach reading. In terms of the methods in this research, analysis was used within the parameters of a case study in order to provide a systematic examination of the educational practices of one culture before predicting any possible use in another. The analysis involved observations of pedagogy and interviews with practitioners which would triangulate with test score data allowed direct comparisons to be made as the consistency of using the same observation questions and same interview questions would provide a commensurate basis for comparisons to be made.

The use of interviews observations and analysis of test scores are appropriate methods used to illuminate borrowing, predicting and analysis in regards to answering the main research questions which examine the practice and outcomes of two different pedagogies. Observations and interviews are used to answer questions of pedagogy in terms of borrowing and predicting

effective practice, whilst test score analysis is used in order to examine the outcomes of the two different approaches to pedagogy and indicate their relative success.

3.5 Methods

Structure of the study

The previous part of this chapter justifies the methodological approach taken for this thesis with reference to the literature in this field of study and why I intend to employ case study. I will now outline the methods used to evaluate the relative effectiveness of reading strategies and how I approached the study as a whole.

I managed the study in these phases:

1. My first objective was to examine the context in terms of policy which led to the practices being employed in schools in England and Florida.
2. I was then concerned with the resulting practice. I arranged access to three classrooms in Florida and three in England in order to establish context and comparison.
3. I then observed the practice and delivery of the intervention programmes in both settings and recorded the observations in note form (appendix 7&8).
4. I later interviewed the practitioners teaching both programmes. I recorded, transcribed and grouped their responses into themes which emerged from both the observations and interview responses.
5. Finally I compiled the test scores of the pupils involved in the study. Four years of test scores in England and one year in Florida were compiled in order to evaluate the relative success or otherwise of the programmes on a quantitative basis.

6. I interviewed practitioners to see what type of feedback was given on the test scores and how this affected evidence based policy development in the schools or LEAs.

My first objective was to look at the context of the policy which led to the practices being employed in schools in England and Florida.

3.6 Policy background

The policy context has been discussed in 2.9 to 2.12 of the literature review. The policy for the teaching of reading in England was directly linked to the National Literacy Strategy (appendix 11) in which all children were expected to cover prescribed literacy content in a set time scale. Barber (1997) comments that the aim of the policy for NLS was:

> 'to set out details of a steady and consistent strategy for raising standards in Literacy, which could be sustained over a long period of time' (Barber 1997: 2).

In terms of the ALS programme, the exact teaching methods and time scale were set out in a four module programme with accompanying handbooks outlining explicit instruction and content including details of phonics teaching.

In Florida the policy for the teaching of reading for the children scoring below average was at the discretion of the districts in the state. The state insisted on pupils reaching the required Sunshine State Standards as outlined in appendix 10. However the methods of delivery were not imposed on the districts and so each district devised its own local strategy to achieve the Sunshine State Standards policy. The policy devised in the district in this study was to use ALL, a predominantly Whole Language Theory approach to improve test scores for pupils aged six to seven.

3.7 Observations in England

When observing practice in England I had first-hand experience of the implementation of ALS for children achieving below average in reading. I held responsibility for a class of twenty eight children of whom six were involved in Additional Literacy Support. The other twenty two children continued to be taught the Literacy Hour. I was able to track the progress of both the class I was responsible for and a parallel Year 3 class engaged in the same process. Patton's (2002) notion of 'purposive sampling' was used by choosing similar sample groups of children taking part in Additional Literacy Support. Both groups fitted the criteria as purposive samples because they held similar characteristics in terms of ability, percentage involved in Additional Literacy Support, gender and teaching input (Cohen and Manion 2000). Both class teachers planned collaboratively and used the same two teaching assistants to deliver ALS ensuring commonality in approach.

My role in England could have been as a participant observer. However because I conducted parallel observations at another site, I decided against participation in the Additional Literacy Support sessions in order to maintain continuity.

The role of non-participant observer was most suitable for this study because the focus was on observation without personally distracting the pupils in any way with my presence. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 93-5) claim that 'complete detachment minimizes reactivity'.

King (1987) provided a useful template for my non-participant observation. He was strongly influenced by Weber (1947) who claimed that the subjective meanings attached to events by individuals are inseparable from social structure. This view requires the classroom observer to understand how teachers act by firstly conducting observations and then following these with interviews to fully understand the meaning of the actions (Wragg 1994). I therefore followed up observations in England and Florida with interviews after the sessions. King (1984) commented:

'My intended relationship with the teacher was that of an interested non-judgmental observer'.

There are some drawbacks to participant observation which I will outline in the next section which deals with my approach to observations in Florida.

3.8 Observations in Florida

Whilst researching in Florida, I was subject to a range of restrictions due to my status as a foreign national. Due to not holding a U.S. social security number, my access to classrooms had to be supervised at all times. The extent of my participation, and involvement was restricted to the role of non-participant observer, interviewer and recorder.

According to Cohen and Manion (2000) observational techniques are perhaps the most privacy-threatening data collection technique for staff. Individuals fear that the data may be used as an evaluation of their performance. Participants may also feel uncomfortable assuming that they are being judged. When conducting this research I assured participants of their anonymity in the writing up of this study and that they would not be adversely affected by the research. By adopting the role as non-participant observer, I was able to develop a holistic perspective of the pedagogy. This was necessary as a basis for the later interviews with the teachers. In order to examine the pedagogy I had to 'look at what was taking place in situ rather than at second hand' (Patton 1990:203). This enabled me to understand the context of the literacy programmes and evaluate elements of practice which appeared promote or impede effective provision. This related directly to sub-question 3: **How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?**

Lincoln (2002) offered a set of criteria which was applicable to my observation schedule given my restrictions in Florida. They are:

a) Researchers should have been closely connected to the scene.

b) Researchers should achieve enough distance from the phenomenon to permit recording action and interpretations relatively free of the researcher's own stake.

c) Data and analysis should include consideration of inferences and interpretations, as well as concrete phenomena (Lincoln, 2002: 9).

Using the guidelines suggested by Lincoln (2002) non-participant observation was an appropriate method for this study and directly addresses research sub-questions 1 and 3.

3.9 Non-participant observation- advantages and disadvantages

I did not have the authority to engage in participant observation in Florida due to legal restrictions as mentioned in 3.8, so any advantage in making the researcher into an active participant in the events being studied was not available to me. One could argue that the role of participant observer provides some excellent opportunities for collecting data. However there are problems as well as advantages. Cohen and Manion (2000) suggest that the researcher could well alter the course of events as part of the group especially in the context of children experiencing a 'new face'. Participant observation is also often difficult to incorporate in evaluations. So the role of outside observer, in the American context, appeared to be more suitable for this study.

3.10 Recording the observations

When considering the most appropriate way of recording the observations for this study, the note taking guidelines of Le Compte and Preissle (1993) were useful as some of the features suggested were:

- Jotting of key words
- Notes for more comprehensive accounts
- Reconstructions of conversations
- Descriptions of events
- Descriptions of my own role/involvement (1993; 224)

I was also mindful of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) suggestions of observational note taking specifically with regards to:

- ongoing notes (in situ)
- notes made on specific themes
- journal notes to record difficulties (1985: 273)

Aware of the elements in Le Compte and Preissle (1993) and Lincoln and Guba's (1985) checklists, non-participant observation would enable me to record critical details which fell outside any preconceived ideas as well as allowing me to explore unintended outcomes (see section 4.7). The non- participant observations were most appropriate in addressing sub-questions 1and 3:

1. What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?

3. How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?

The non-participant style of observations allowed me to concentrate fully on making detailed notes of the pedagogy and any factors which may have impeded or promoted effective learning.

The observations were recorded in detailed but simple field notes documenting events in the lesson and took in to account the suggestions made by Le Compte and Preissle (1993) and Lincoln and Guba (1985). The data has been collected through observations of six Additional Literacy Support lessons delivered by three teaching assistants in three different classrooms in England and six Accelerated Literacy Learning lessons delivered by three teachers in three different schools in Florida. The six lessons observed in England were all from Module 4 of Additional Literacy Support.

The notes recorded in both settings were in chronological order and recorded in to two sections with the broad headings of:

Actions and responses of instructor **Responses and actions of pupils**.

The two heading used captured the elements of teaching and learning present in the introduction, development and conclusion to each of the sessions. I used this approach in both Florida and England to ensure consistency and to see how the teaching and learning reflected policy intentions. Samples of the observation notes are in appendices 7 and 8.

I acknowledge that the data collected through observation is limited by the size of the study but I believe it to be rich in authenticity. My role was not viewed in any way judgemental by the colleagues observed as I was not an inspector nor did I have any particular personal focus on their performance. I was simply observing in the role of a curious outsider to see how a normal day to day lesson would occur. I believe this scenario has produced more realistic data.

3.11 Analysing the observations

When analysing the observations, I used key questions based on a model designed by Vidovich (2001) as shown in appendix 9. Vidovich's model was appropriate because the policy provided the context for the styles of pedagogy employed in each setting. I adapted Vidovich's model in to three key questions for observations to suit this particular study because the sub-questions needed further reduction in order to analyse specific issues relating to them. The three key questions were used in both settings to analyse sub-questions 1 and 3.

1. What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?

3. How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?

Question a relates to sub-question 1 and questions b and c to sub-question 3.

The questions are:

a) What are the key features of your lesson and how does the policy affect your delivery?

b) Do you adapt the framework/policy in any particular way ?

c) Did you feel confident or empowered to use any of your own subject knowledge and experience used to modify the programme?

The key questions were used for the observations in both settings to provide an overall framework which captured the practice in schools. The questions were used when reviewing the notes made during the observation schedule as shown in 3.9 and appendix 8.

I then used an observational analysis model developed by Wragg (1994). Wragg's model was appropriate because it directly addressed practice. The analysis took the following form:

- The first requirement was to view my field notes and reflect on what had been observed in the context of single lessons and across the six lessons.
- The next step focussed on the 'salient points of the lesson for comment or discussion' (Wragg, 1994:71). These would be the parts of the lesson that had revealed particular styles of pedagogy. These parts of the lesson I marked as 'significant'.
- Subsequently the 'critical events' from the observational data were used to 'identify patterns' (1994:73). The use of critical events helped develop theme headings.
- The next stage of analysis was to identify key episodes in the lessons which represented themes. This would be in order to define the themes as different from each other but within the connected parameters of the overall study. This included issues about practitioners' knowledge of the policy, accuracy of delivery and adaptation to suit the needs of the pupils.
- The following stage of the analysis process was to try to make sense of the emerging themes. These were grouped more accurately due to the use of the questions in my modification of Vidovich's model (see Table 1 Chapter 4)
- After the analysis, issues beyond my immediate focus but which impacted greatly on the themes of practice and outcomes were grouped in to other emerging themes.

These themes are reported in the findings Chapter 4.3. The observations for questions a,b,c and d on page 115 were later followed by interviews with the practitioners so that issues of practice could be more fully explored.

3.12 Interviews

During this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three teachers in Florida and three classroom assistants in England who participated in the delivery of each programme. Two classroom assistants in England were from one primary school and the third from another school in the same LEA. The three teachers in Florida were from three different schools in the district. The schools in both England and Florida were from similar middle ranking socio- economic backgrounds based on average incomes and free/assisted school meals. The aim of the interviews was to learn about views and perceptions of the deliverers of the programmes. This would enable me to focus on sub-question 3 **How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?** as the interviewees would be given an opportunity to elaborate on their style of teaching following the observations and explain their understanding of effectiveness.

The interviews were as Kvale (1996) defined 'focused' in terms of identifying understanding of styles of pedagogy and factors which promoted or impeded effectiveness. However, the interviews were not strictly structured (to allow sub questions and further discussion) nor entirely non-directive. I decided on using interviews rather than questionnaires because I anticipated that respondents would become more engaged in face to face conversations and I would be able to continue lines of enquiry with follow up questions. Oppenheim (1992:81-82) suggests that interviews have a higher response rate than questionnaires, because respondents become more actively involved and are more motivated to comment on the research than is usually mentioned in a covering letter to a questionnaire.

The emphasis on conversational interviews rather than questionnaires, allowed for greater depth of discussion about how practitioners understood and delivered reading strategies. Conversational

interviews were also relevant in evaluating the factors which promoted or impeded effective learning by encouraging teachers and teaching assistants to give their own account of the pedagogy they used and any limitations or opportunities they encountered.

I used semi-structured but focused interviews employing a standardised set of questions for each interview. The questions and sequence were determined in advance so that all interviewees were asked questions on the same areas and in the same order. These questions were also based on Vidovich's (2001) model (see Appendix 9) which appropriately examined practice. The semi-structured interviews allowed me flexibility to probe more deeply into areas where practice was being adapted or refined, or to clarify unknown and unforeseen areas. My reasoning behind using the same set of questions for interviews in England and Florida was three-fold and agreed with Patton (1980) in his justification of this approach:

> 'Firstly if all respondents answered broadly the same questions it would be easier to compare responses. Secondly, it would be simpler to organise and analyse data and thirdly it would permit the reader to see clearly the instrumentation used in any evaluation' (Patton 1980:206).

When designing the interview I used six key questions as a basis to probe into areas of practice employed by the schools. These were linked to the sub-questions. Cohen & Manion (2000) suggest that often at the start of interviews respondents may give short, less elaborate responses. The flexibility of a semi-structured interview allowed me to pursue the five scripted questions with unscripted sub questions probing rationale for the actions of the respondents. The use of more open ended questions also allowed for greater insight into the interpretations of policy and allowed me to establish a rapport with the respondents in order to illicit greater elaboration.

The six questions detailed below are posed in order to address the research sub-questions.

Interview questions a and b refer to sub-question 1: **What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?**

Questions c,d,and e refer to sub-question 3 **How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?**

Interview question f is a follow up question referring to the test score results and so addresses sub question 2 **What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?**

Questions

1. What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?

Interview question a: *Where did ALL/ALS originate and what is its purpose?*

Interview question b: *What are the key features of your lesson and how does the policy affect your delivery?*

3. How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?

Interview question c*: Do you adapt the framework/ policy in any particular way?*

Interview question d: *Does the school policy allow for flexibility adaptation or change? How is this managed?*

Interview question e: *Did you use any of your own subject knowledge and experience to meet the needs of individuals?*

2. What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?

Interview question f: *What did you do with the results of your Additional Literacy Support/ Accelerated Literacy Learning work?*

In carrying out the interviews in both settings, I used a process shown in a model outlined by Alexiadou (1999). This process followed these points:

- Conduct interviews following a common set of questions to address the themes of policy, practice and outcomes.
- Analysis of data focusing on the parts which showed more understanding of the meaning-identifying phrases most relevant to the experience.
- Grouping the responses in to statements that illustrated what I wanted to explore.
- Illustrate the themes in specific terms using the responses and analysing for consistency or divergence.
- Establish links between the themes to discover relationships and interrogate the data from the perspective of the research focus.

- Develop any generalizations. (Alexiadou, 1999:12).

This process was relevant to this study as it provided a practical model which suited the interview analysis stage in order to group the data in to emerging themes.

3.13 Collection and analysis of the interview data

The questions provided in 3.12 were used to interview the teachers in Florida and the teaching assistants in England. Limited time and access in Florida meant that I was restricted to recording three interviews at three different schools using ALL. In England I also interviewed three teaching assistants delivering ALS. Although this is a small number, the data collected was sufficient to address the questions and was also supported by observations and test score data.

When focusing on analysing the data, the model from Alexiadou (1999) provided a logical step by step approach to getting the most from the interview responses.

The first requirement was to listen to the recordings and transcribe them. Sections of the transcript were then marked as significant in the interviewees understanding of the context of practice. The next stage of analysis was to identify key words or phrases in the interview responses which contributed to a theme. In following Alexiadou's (1999) model of interview analysis, the next action was to group all of the emerging pieces of data under a 'thematic label' (Alexiadou, 1999:67). This was in order to define the themes as different from each other within the connected parameters of the overall study. The next stage of the analysis process was to try to make sense of the emerging themes. Themes emerged following the use of the interview questions because the questions facilitated the process of sifting the data. Some responses were simply on positive or negative replies to more closed questions and others in comparable responses to open ended

questions. I anticipated areas of contradiction, misconception or disagreement and kept track of any comments which fell in to these categories.

Following this analysis, issues beyond my immediate focus but which impacted greatly on the themes of practice and outcomes were grouped in to emerging themes. These themes are reported in Chapter 4.3.

3.14 Description of the study sample in England

The study sample in England consisted of two parallel classes of mixed ability totalling 55 children. The Additional Literacy Support group consisted of 21 pupils across the two classes. This was 38% of the whole year intake.

There were children involved in this research who were not part of the Additional Literacy Support programme. These children made up a second sub-group. This second sub-group had scored level 2C and below in their English Reading and Writing SATs but were able to work successfully through the Additional Literacy Support flow-chart and therefore the school did not include them in the Additional Literacy Support programme. This group served as a comparative sample as they were of similar ability in terms of scores but did not take part in Additional Literacy Support. This group will be referred to as Group 2 in the Findings Chapter.

The two classes were divided into four groups,

Group 1: Children who were extracted from class and received Additional Literacy Support – (Referred to as Group 1 in the Descriptive Findings Chapter 4)

Group 2: Children who scored below 2C but were able to successfully complete the Additional Literacy test flow chart – (Group 2 in the Descriptive Findings Chapter 4)

Group 3: Children who took part in Additional Literacy Support in Year 3, and who completed the end of module test. This group is referred to as Discontinued Additional Literacy Support (Group 3 in the Descriptive Findings Chapter 4) and featured in graph 4.

Group 4: The rest of the class, being taught The National Literacy Strategy referred to as Group 4 in the Descriptive Findings Chapter 4. (This group is featured in Graph 5)

Pupils receiving Additional Literacy Support (Group1) were taught in groups of between four and six.

3.15 Explanation of the use of NFER test data in England.

The quantitative data compiled for the groups studied in England relates to scores achieved in NFER English reading tests in the four years following the end of Key Stage 1 SATs i.e. Year 3 results in 2000, Year 4 results in 2001, Year 5 results in 2002 and Year 6 results in 2003. NFER English reading standardised scores were used as easily comparable numeric results as they show a range of scores from 70 to 130 with the average score being 100. The test score data was collected annually and so no additional tests were given to the pupils for the purpose of this study. The school involved in the study used NFER reading tests because following research by the school's senior management team, they concluded that NFER tests had been the most consistently accurate performance indicator of whether a child would achieve Level 4 in their English SAT in Year 6. These tests were used across all year groups in the school. The NFER reading tests also covered similar content areas to SATs. The school also found that some pupils were able to gain advanced access to optional SATs papers and that was distorting the true reflection of their progress. The Descriptive Findings Chapter 4 also reports on the final Year Six SAT score as a measure of whether the use of ALS was effective in achieving the policy goals of the government.

3.16 Test score data collection in England

The test score data was collected in order to address sub-question 2. **What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?**

In studying the outcomes of Additional Literacy Support in terms of test score data, four groups of children have been identified. The four groups referred to in 3.14 have been identified to allow for a fair comparison of the effectiveness of ALS to be evaluated. For example; pupils of similar ability have been identified in groups 1 and 2 and their results tracked. This is in order to avoid the criticism that some pupils may have made progress without the use of the intervention strategy or that the gap in performance may have increased over time as the below average ability pupils were unable to progress at the same rate as their peers in their age group.

In England, Additional Literacy Support was aimed at Year 3 and Year 4 pupils although the long term aim of the policy underpinning the programme was to achieve 80% of level 4 in reading by Year 6. Therefore the test score data was collected over a four year period. The results of NFER tests will be presented in Chapter 4 for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 in order to monitor progress whilst the pupils were leading up towards the policy aim of a level 4 in SATs in Year 6. The recording of these NFER scores in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 would determine whether the intervention had resulted in a lasting improvement. The final test scores reported in this study from England are the Year 6 SATs results which will show how successful the use of Additional Literacy Support had been in achieving the government target of 80% level 4 in English SATs.

3.17 Description of the study sample in Florida

The school providing the test score results in Florida was a five form entry. All pupils who were twelve percentage points below year group average were ranked on a points score. This amounted to fifty pupils.

Twenty three pupils within five points of the average score were technically in need of Accelerated Literacy Learning as the programme was targeted at the below average pupils. However due to limited resources and staff training issues, the school were only able to accommodate approximately half of the 50 pupils identified by the selection criteria. The first twenty three children who fell just below the average were therefore deemed to need the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme. However, the school decided not to provide the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme for these children and instead selected the next twenty seven pupils who fell 7 to 12 percentage points below the average who were deemed to be more 'at risk'.

This provided the research with three distinct groups:

1. Pupils who scored the average score or five points above and did not receive ALL
2. Pupils who scored average and five points below and did not receive ALL
3. Pupils who scored between five and twelve points below the average and were selected for ALL.

The pupils involved in the programme are reviewed after forty sessions and can be removed from the programme depending on whether they are deemed successful to leave the intervention strategy or deemed to require further specialist help. The programme lasted for one year for children between the ages of six and seven. The graph contained in Descriptive Findings Chapter 4.15 is

therefore a one off record of the results of the cohort one year later after the original Developmental Reading Assessment, and refers to the reading comprehension levels achieved by the three identified groups at the end of the year when pupils had returned to class and were not extracted for ALL.

3.18 Test score data collection in Florida

In Florida test score data was taken from one school over a two-year period. In the first year the pupils were actively engaged on the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme. In the following year, after the programme had finished, the test score data was recorded to determine the lasting effects of the intervention. This level of data collection was appropriate for Florida as the state policy is to maintain Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). The progress achieved and maintained by the pupils involved could be examined the year after the input. This method of test score collection was supported by Wahl (2002) in her study of Accelerated Literacy Learning programme where she analysed the structure of the programme and monitored its effects with pupils' test score data the following year. I have presented findings in the same way in the next chapter.

3.19 Test score data presentation and analysis

The data presented in England is in the form of numerical test score data from NFER tests in England. The range of data on the tests is from standardised scores of 70 to 130. This data from each group has been collected and added together to report a group average for the respective groups in the study. The scores have been converted in to bar charts which provide immediate visual comparison between the groups. There is a descriptive commentary following the

presentation of the bar charts which explains the movement and relevance in progress of the groups identified for the study.

The final bar chart of the four year study in England will be presented in the form of SATs levels. Test results in Florida are presented in terms of the attainment made on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) to a numerical score. The numerical score was then converted to a level. A description of the results has been provided on the themes emerging from the test scores.

3.20 Triangulation

As this study has limitations in terms of numbers of interviewees and number of observations, it was necessary to triangulate the qualitative data with quantitative test score data. The triangulation of the different data enables the findings to be more robust. According to Lincoln and Guba:

> 'triangulation of data is achieved by using different sources and methods' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 307).

This helps to give added credibility and validity to these research findings.

This study has allowed for the cross-checking and validation of findings from one method of data collection by using at least one other. Data gathered from interviews was used to validate classroom observations. The data from observations and interviews was triangulated with the test scores. This was to measure consistency in what had been observed, what practitioners had said, and the outcomes in terms of test scores. The triangulation of data directly addressed all the research sub-questions as they relate to styles of pedagogy and outcomes including test scores. By comparing and contrasting one source of information with another this study has produced a more comprehensive and balanced inquiry in response to the research questions.

Denzin (1997) describes three possible outcomes of the triangulation in educational research; convergence, inconsistency and contradiction. Convergence takes place when all the data collected and analysed points to the same conclusion. Inconsistency occurs if one set of data does not confirm the findings of another set but does not contradict it either. Contradiction may occur if the various data disagree to such an extent that it is not possible to provide a reasonable explanation. Contradiction and inconsistency may not appear as desirable outcomes for this study but the theoretical design allows for this to occur if present. However if a lack of convergence occurs then it can provide different perspectives that may actually provide a deeper understanding of the research question. For example, practitioners may feel that their delivery is effective yet see no obvious gains in test score outcome.

These possible outcomes of triangulation have a real value for this research as it will serve to validate or question the data collected in terms of accuracy and consistency (Denzin, 1997). The findings are revealed in chapter four.

3.21 Ethical considerations

When conducting this research, guidelines set out in the British Psychological Society handbook (2000) were closely observed. The guidelines have been agreed on ethical issues. These guidelines include the issues of consent, deception, withdrawal from the research, confidentiality, protection of participants, observational research and giving advice (BPS, 2000).

O'Connell (1994) suggests that researchers should inform potential research subjects about the nature and purpose of the study in order to seek their permission and assure them of confidentiality.

I also worked within the guidance of the British Educational Research Association (2008) which stipulates that all educational research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for:

The person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom (BERA 2008).

In the light of these ethical guidelines I applied this list of considerations when conducting this study:

- Permission to use the schools to carry out research was granted by head teachers and governing bodies.
- Any scores used in the project could be taken from the normal end of year testing process at the sample schools. No additional testing was required for this study.
- Permission to use the children's scores within the research assignment was granted by the head teacher.
- Further permission to use and analyse the children's scores was granted by parents/guardians via a letter to be sent out. (in Appendix 1)
- Although scores were used and analysed in this research no child has actually been named.
- Permission to use data provided by a School District in Florida comparing school performance on the F-Cat tests was granted.

The pupils taking part in the two reading programmes were involved because they scored below average in reading tests. Unless a parent specifically requested the non-participation of their children in the programmes, the pupils were included until they reached a stage where the programmes were terminated at the discretion of the school. The parents of pupils used in this research were informed by letter (Appendix 1) and their full permission to observe them in lessons and use their test scores was agreed in advance.

I have outlined the methodology used to support this study and the methods which this entails. In Chapter Four I will describe the findings made using this approach.

Chapter Four: Descriptive Findings

4.1: Introduction.

This study reports on how Additional Literacy Support and Accelerated Literacy Learning have been used as strategies to teach reading in England and Florida. An analysis of the observations, interviews and test scores used to address the research questions led to the emergence of four significant themes:

Theme 1: Practice in the context of policy.

Theme 2: Compliance.

Theme 3: Technician or professional?

Theme 4: Outcomes in test score data.

This descriptive findings chapter is structured around reporting on the themes in the order presented above. The research question and sub-questions will be addressed through these four themes.

4.2: Research Questions

The main research question as outlined in 1.8 is:

What are the main differences between reading strategies in England and Florida?

This question is addressed through theme one 'Practice in the context of policy'.

The first sub-question (What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?) is also addressed through theme one.

The second sub-question (What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?) is addressed through theme four 'Outcomes in test score data'.

The third sub-question: How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness? is addressed through themes two and three of Compliance and Technician or professional?

Method-appropriate questions for observation and interview purposes have been used in order to address the three sub-questions. As outlined in 3.10 and 3.11, these questions were based on a framework for analysis as suggested by Vidovich (2001) to investigate practice issues. Sub-questions 1 and 3 have been adapted for use in observations and interviews whilst sub-question 2 has been addressed through the test score data as described in 4.10.

The 'method-appropriate' questions to address the three main sub-questions are:

a. How aware are the practitioners in both settings of the origin of the practice and its purpose? (interview, sub-question 1)

b. What are the key features of your lesson and how does the policy affect your delivery? (observation and interview, sub-question 1)

c. How consistently is the practice delivered in the schools involved in this study? (observation, sub-question 3)

d. Does the school policy allow for flexibility adaptation or change? How is this managed? (interview and observation, sub-question 3)

e. What are outcomes of the programme as judged by test scores? (test scores, sub-question 2)

f. What did you do with the results of your Additional Literacy Support/ALL work? (Interview, sub-question 2)

4.3: Themes

Initially, in considering the outcomes which I anticipated might emerge from the observations interviews and test scores, I was concentrating on addressing the main research question and the three sub-questions as identified in 1.8. However, during observations and interviews, two other strong themes emerged which were consequences of investigating the sub-questions. The first of these is notions of compliance (theme two) which will be reported in section 4.8 and is closely linked to sub-question 3. The second is professionalism of staff (theme three) to use their knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the learner. This is also closely linked to sub-question 3 and will be described in section 4.9.

The purpose of the following Table 1 is to provide a précis of the findings using method-appropriate questions. These responses address the three sub-questions as each sub-question is accompanied by a method appropriate question and the responses in England and America are available alongside each question.

Table 1: Table showing condensed response to research questions through observation and interviews.

Questions for the context of practice. Observations and Interviews	**Additional Literacy Support (England)**	**Accelerated Literacy Learning (Florida)**
Addressing sub-question 1: a. How aware are the practitioners in both settings of the origin of practice and its purpose? Interview	National Strategy to achieve 80% level 4 by 2002. Interviewees unsure of origins.	State policy to achieve Sunshine State Standards. Interviewees aware of Reading Recovery origins.
Addressing sub-question 1: b. What lesson processes/ formats are used? Observation and interview.	Government imposed phonics based strategy directed by LEA training. Delivered by Classroom Assistants.	State led standards with training led by District Instructionalists in some Whole Language theory methods. Lessons delivered by teachers trained in A.L.L.
Addressing sub-question 1: c. How consistently is the practice delivered in the schools involved in this study? Observation	Consistently applied. Set strategy. No differences noted. Adherence to phonics teaching in handbook. Some variation in size of groupings	Similar format to sessions but in built flexibility to develop the needs of individuals in Whole Language context.
Addressing sub-question 3: d. How open is ALS/ALL to interpretation by practitioner in order to respond to the needs of the pupils? Observation and interview	Practice outlined rigidly in handbook. Little flexibility shown in delivery. Expectation of staff to adhere to module. Phonics-based end of module tests used to determine revision or progression.	Flexibility to adapt to the needs of the pupils. Confidence in training to act expertly. Teachers expected to use their expertise in dealing with individuals' needs with a progressive Whole Language approach to developing individual reading ability.
Addressing sub-question 2: e. What are outcomes of the programme as judged by test scores? f. How are results from test scores used to modify practice? Interviews, Test Score Data	Prescribed testing of module which led to repetition of module or referral to SEN support. Results for reading SAT at Year 6 published.	Determined next stage and level of reading for the pupil. Results sent to district office, published yearly. Policy reviewed every five years.

Theme 1: Practice in the context of policy.

4.4: Practice in the context of policy.

This section describes how the observed practices operated in the context of policy in both settings. The first research sub-question **(What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?)** is addressed in observations and interviews with practitioners. In addressing this question the observations made and the responses from interviewees revealed that there was a fundamental difference in the type of practitioner delivering the programmes. In England the staff delivering the Additional Literacy Support Programme consisted of newly recruited teaching assistants. In Florida qualified teachers delivered Accelerated Literacy Learning. I acknowledge that this may appears unfair to ask rather different levels of practitioner the same questions. However, the main research question is about the nature of the practices for teaching reading and to evaluate the effectiveness of the two approaches. As government policy in England during the time of this study funded teaching assistants to deliver Additional Literacy Support, then the investigation had to be directed at them as deliverers of a phonics-based approach.

The first interview question for the practitioners in England was modified to suit a semi-structured conversational interview style. Questions are in italics emboldened, answers are in italics.

Where did the policy for Additional Literacy Support originate and what is its purpose?

Interviewee 1: *Don't know……It was meant to bring the children up to the same as the average for their age in schools.*

Interviewee 2: *No idea.*

Interviewee 3: *Not sure……. it is part of the literacy strategy though.*

The first part of the question, focussing on origins appears to indicate a lack of knowledge of the programme which the teaching assistants were delivering. However, in respect of the second part of question 1, the purpose of the policy, the teaching assistants confirmed their understanding of their school using Additional Literacy Support as the main strategy for below average readers but had little idea of why Additional Literacy Support in particular was being used. This point is made in the following comments:

Interviewee 2**:** *Children were to be highlighted and to be given extra support to improve their literacy and make them more confident in class.*

Interviewee 3**:** *After their Key Stage one SATs results they were to be given extra help to make sure they improve their SATs scores. ALS is supposed to help them improve.*

In contrast the teachers in Florida gave what I would define as a much more informed response to the same initial question:

Question: ***Where did the policy for Accelerated Literacy Learning originate and what is its purpose?***

Interviewee A: *Our policy comes from the state DOE, which includes 90 minutes of reading requirement which our literacy coach in school helps us with …..She also makes sure we are teaching to the sunshine state standards….. Our 'at risk' children are involved in Accelerated Literacy Learning to try to help them to make progress towards the state standards.*

Interviewee B: *It is like Reading Recovery, but we work with three students at a time rather than just the individual….. We learned all about the techniques and the process and how well it works during our training. The district decided on using ALL after research in Florida showed it to be the best approach for our students. You could say that it's a State product for our State students.*

When considering the interview responses from both sets of practitioners, it is possible to interpret that there was a confidence evident in the responses of the American teachers, and an ability to answer the questions directly in an informed manner, which was not evident in the responses from the English practitioners. The more precise and detailed responses of the teachers in Florida regarding the origins of the programme indicates a greater level of knowledge of their programme than the replies of their English counterparts. One could take the view that this suggests greater clarity in terms of how the programme helps pupils to attain higher test scores as staff using the programme show confidence in its well-researched teaching techniques. The training of staff is also mentioned by the teachers in Florida which is pursued in the next question and will be discussed in greater length in Chapter Six (6.4).

4.5 Lesson processes/formats used to put the policy into practice.

This section addresses sub-question **1. What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?**

Question: **What are the key features of your lesson and how does the policy affect your delivery?**

As indicated in Table 1 this question is addressed with a mixture of observations and interview responses. During the observations recorded in England, all of the teachers who supervised the teaching assistants demonstrated a rigid application in the timing and format of the Literacy Hour session. Each lesson was content driven in accordance with the Literacy Hour format. The session started with fifteen minutes of shared reading, followed by a specific fifteen minute section on word, sentence or text level content. The third section of twenty minutes was guided reading and at

this point the Additional Literacy Support Group were taken out of the class and returned at the fifty minute point for a ten minute plenary.

This format was directed by government policy as outlined in the National Literacy Strategy described in Chapter 2.10. The ALS group was extracted from the main class after the second part of the class lesson and returned to the class twenty minutes later for the plenary session. During all observations, each twenty minute ALS lesson was rigidly structured in a four part lesson. The classroom assistants had the module booklets at hand and adhered to the instructions of the ALS lesson plan.

When interviewing the classroom assistants on their delivery, they were all able to identify their part in the process. The following two responses best illustrate this point. This will also be discussed further in section 4.9 of this chapter under Theme three 'Role of technician or professional'. The next sets of responses are from the teaching assistants in England.

Sub-question1. What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?

Question: What are the key features of your lesson and how does the policy affect your delivery?

Interviewee 2: *I was just given guidelines to follow in the manual and I stuck to them…. it was phonics mainly…sounding out words, getting the children to recognise how the sounds were represented by the letters....as well as sentence level work relating to the topics the children were covering in class.*

Interviewee 3: *We went back on stuff from year one and two that the children did not get, or missed first time…. phonics mostly….. We just went over the lessons in the manual one after another revising a lot of the sounds the children didn't understand in year two. The children do this until they can pass the test at the end of the module.*

The responses in England indicate that the practice for Additional Literacy Support related closely to the lesson plans in the module handbooks of revising the high volume and frequency of phonics in taught in Year 1 and Year 2 as explained in Chapter 2.7. It is possible to interpret that the interviewees seemed mainly concerned with covering the set amount of phonics prescribed in the Additional Literacy Support handbook in a 'mechanical way'. I have used the term mechanical to describe responses which indicate that the classroom assistants have taken their instructions set out by Barber (1999) in the introduction to the ALS module handbook quite literally. The observed mechanistic following of instructions could be as Winograd (1987), describes as 'Reductionist' in terms of doing the job required but acting as a technician in delivery as illustrated by the answer of interviewee 2: *I was just given guidelines to follow in the manual and I stuck to them.*

The responses of the classroom assistants suggest that adherence to the prescribed lesson format dictated by the programme would result in the pupils passing the test and achieving the aim of their module as indicated by:

Interviewee 2: *The children do this until they can pass the test at the end of the module.*

This approach to the delivery was consistent with the ALS handbook instructions as Barber (1999) claims in the foreword to the programme:

'The purpose of Additional Literacy Support is to help pupils in KS2 who have already fallen behind' (ALS, 1999:1).

Barber also adds that for the teaching assistants delivering the programme:

'This programme offers them a set of structured teaching materials to help them make a significant impact on standards in the classroom' (ALS 1999).

From the responses of the English classroom assistants it is possible to assume that they applied their instructions literally as indicated by interviewee 2:

We just went over the lessons in the manual one after another revising a lot of the sounds the children didn't understand in Year Two.

Sub-question 1 Florida

1. What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?

Question: ***What lesson processes/ formats are used for ALL? (Florida)***

As indicated in Table 1, question 2 is addressed with a mixture of observations and interview responses. The next section begins with the response to the question in the American setting with the observations. During all of the observations made in Florida, the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme in place in the schools consisted of thirty minutes sessions on a daily basis. The class teachers took the pupils selected for the programme in groups of three. In each case, the thirty minute session comprised of two children reading independently whilst the teacher provided individual instruction with the third child. The first part of the session involved the children reading known texts. These were written in a style close to that of oral language and used predictable language and repetition. The teacher chose a known text and then modelled the reading and illustrated matching words within the same text. Word-level work and sentence-level context were integral parts of each lesson observed. In all of the sessions observed, the teacher made

teaching decisions as the lesson progressed as to what words to clarify and teach discretely. The decisions reflected the difficulties which each child experienced as well as developing the knowledge of how words work in a contextual sense. This enabled the pupils to work from previous knowledge, understanding and context. During all of the lessons observed teachers kept a running record of the reading performance of the pupils and concluded by giving the pupils a book from a graded scheme. The teaching was punctuated by questions about meaning to check the pupils' understanding of the text.

The teachers then introduced the pupils to new and more challenging texts in order to extend the pupils' reading range. The teachers provided detailed support for the pupils as they read the more difficult texts by stopping on more difficult words and writing them down with the children and analysing the correct spelling. Magnetic alphabet letters were then used to assist word analysis.

All observed lessons concluded with a recap on what the pupils had covered and understood as well as the new knowledge or reading skill which the pupils had acquired. The pupils were then asked to demonstrate their new knowledge and skills learnt during the session. Each observation in Florida involved teachers building on what the pupils could do and then extending their reading skills according to their individual needs and abilities.

During the interviews in Florida, responses by teachers to the same question were quite different from their English counterparts. Teachers in Florida demonstrated flexibility in approach and a desire to work from what the pupil could do and develop understanding of the text as demonstrated in the following exchanges:

Question: What are the key features of your lesson and how does the policy affect your delivery?

Interviewee A: *We begin developing the child from their own starting point and addressing their needs by looking out for the problems they are having in their reading and looking how help them…a lot of it is reminding children how words are represented and helping them to recognise and read them to make sense of the text….. So the methods developed during our training are used……. We focus on some phonics, but also vocabulary, fluency and most importantly comprehension. These are all requirements for the state standards anyway.*

Interviewee B*: We begin with what the child can do, build on what the child is trying to do and work out what the child needs to learn in order to meet the state standards…. Some of the children have weak vocabulary because they don't speak much English…. So we have to target that …… sometimes the phonics is fine because they can break down words in Spanish and sound them out to make sense of the text…… and use similar skills understand the text in English.*

From the similarity in responses of two teachers in Florida in these selected excerpts, it is possible to assume that they demonstrated an adherence to the district policy (see Appendix 10). The main focus in the interview responses is on a child-centred approach as described by Wahl (2002) in which Whole Language theory is used in developing the reading skills of the pupil to make sense of the text.

From the responses given, one could take the view that the process used to put the policy into practice has a greater emphasis on the teacher's ability to help pupils develop their reading skills for meaning rather than a strict reliance on the programme itself as illustrated with ALS. The starting point according to the teachers interviewed is the pupil, and how the understanding of text by the pupil can be developed. This is consistent with the aim of Accelerated Literacy Learning programme.

The demands of improvement in test scores in England and Florida provide commonality for both sets of observations and interviews. The above observations and interview responses in England may indicate that the English model addresses the issue with a more traditionalist phonics-led approach, whilst in Florida; the model is more child-centred and Whole Language theory based. The Accelerated Literacy Learning programme used the skills of the teacher, developed in the training, to fashion more of a bespoke programme to improve the pupils' reading for meaning.

In contrast, the teaching assistants in England delivered a set programme to the pupils to develop letter sound correspondence. This programme was repeated in the expectation that the pupil would make progress.

4.6: Consistency of practice affected by policy.

In order to address sub-question1 further this section describes how the two approaches were practiced in England and Florida in different schools.

Question: ***How consistently is ALS being practised in the schools involved in this study? (England)***

All six observations in England revealed a consistency in practice. All lessons followed the same Literacy Hour format with the Additional Literacy Support group leaving the class after the first two sections of the lesson. The module handbooks contained the lesson plans for each session and provided the vehicle to achieve the policy aims. The lessons were taught from the module handbook with little deviation. The basic format of a four part mini session was observed in all lessons consisting of:

- A phonic reading game.
- Revision of a phonic

- Examples of using the sound.
- Revision activity, learning to read and spell the sound correctly.

Apart from minor deviations in the use of teaching assistants for school organisational reasons, all Additional Literacy Support lessons followed the same format content and teaching input. The teaching techniques recommended in the ALS module handbook page 7 were adhered to, and the lessons progressed without any attempts to use different approaches when any pupils had difficulty in understanding.

Florida

When examining the consistency of practice in Florida, there were commonalities observed in all six sessions as outline in the previous section. The general process was entirely consistent and followed the format of:

- Pupils re-read the book before the session with the teacher
- Teachers initially talking to pupils about their reading experience e.g. the characters they liked in the stories, the emotions in the story and how the emotions impacted on the reader
- Recapping on any difficult words on which the pupils struggled
- Teachers making running records of any difficulties
- Asking comprehension questions during and after the reading
- Concluding by selecting a book from a graded scheme which contained words which the child had learnt and been taught to overcome.

The extensive reading book scheme allowed the teacher to choose a book which dealt with the particular words that were causing the child difficulty. The basic format of the six sessions was the

same. The differences arose from the individual difficulties displayed by the pupils which is a natural consequence of a child centred approach as Wahl states:

> 'Teacher input into ALL will be directly related to the needs and level of the student' (Wahl, 2002: 3).

The Accelerated Literacy Learning lessons built on what the pupils could do and developed understanding of the text. This was evident in all six sessions observed. The pupils had their individual needs supported in their development in reading with bespoke techniques. In four of the six sessions the children were engaged by the teaching and made progress on to the next book level. However, the fifth and sixth sessions observed, dealt with some specific problems which meant that the children were engaged in consolidating their knowledge rather than progression. In examining the style of pedagogy and relationship to policy, both ALS and ALL were practiced consistently and demonstrated a phonic- based approach in England and a Whole Language approach in Florida. This theme of 'style of pedagogy' addresses sub-question1 because the style of delivery is closely related to the ability of the individuals delivering it. This will be discussed in the next section.

4.7: Interpretation of policy by practitioners

This section describes how the effectiveness of the programmes was determined by the interpretation of practice by those delivering ALS and ALL. This addresses sub-question 3

How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?

Question 4: ***How open is the policy to interpretation by practitioner in order to respond to the needs of the pupils?***

This question was addressed using observations and interviews. The six observations conducted in England did not show teaching assistants interpreting policy differently in order to adapt or refine their teaching to suit the needs of the learner. The Additional Literacy Support manual was followed quite literally on all occasions as outlined in the following description from the observation extract.

A technique employed by the teaching assistants in four of the six sessions was referred to in the ALS module handbook (1999:115) as 'supported reading'**.** This was designed to complement guided reading which had been led in class by the qualified teacher the day before. The purpose of supported reading sessions was to provide children with extra opportunities to respond to the text and extend their reading skills to distinguish fact from opinion. The teaching assistants observed in four lessons using this technique, followed a strict format of questions scripted in the module booklet (Module 4:120). The children were asked to summarise what they had found out in the report style text. Although the pupils were able to read most of the words in the text, the pupils struggled to demonstrate an understanding of the meaning of the text. The pupils were able to locate some key events and characters in the report, but when the questions on meaning proved too difficult the pupils became distracted. When the pupils were unable to complete task, the classroom assistant answered the questions for them.

The next part of the session involved the children identifying what was factual about the report and locating the opinion based in the comments of the characters being interviewed. It was at this part of the lesson that the children were asked to independently highlight two facts from the text and two opinions. The classroom assistant applied the prescribed technique of '*Give me a fact…. Now turn it into an opinion'*. Pupils were unable to distinguish fact and opinion at this stage but the

classroom assistants did not attempt to interpret the programme in such a way as to make the prescribed lesson more meaningful for the pupils. Instead, in all four observations using supported reading the classroom assistants persevered with the instructions in the module handbook.

I followed up the observations with interviews to establish why the classroom assistants did not attempt to interpret the programme in any way.

Question: Do you adapt the framework, policy in any particular way?

Interviewee 1: *No we kept to what was in the manual.*

Interviewee 2: *No we did literally what was in the book….. I did it exactly as I was told to do on the course and by the teacher….just what was in the book really.*

Looking at the above answers to the practice of Additional Literacy Support, it appears that the teaching assistants rigidly applied the ALS module handbook. The context of the implementation of the Literacy Hour in the schools used for this research indicated a determination to apply the detail of ALS as literally as possible. The teaching assistants all demonstrated an unquestioning approach to the delivery of Additional Literacy Support and a feeling that the ALS manual was not to be interpreted by practitioners as shown in the next response to the question:

Question: *Why did you not adapt the lessons at all*?

Interviewee 2: *I wasn't sure if we were allowed to change anything….. I didn't want to get anything wrong…. I had to fill in an evaluation sheet at the end to show that I had done it right.*

The following extract from an Additional Literacy Support observation reveals some of the time constraints and reluctance to adapt the lesson even when pupils did not understand the context and meaning for the words that they were asked to read, spell and apply.

TA: *When you want to describe how something is done you add ly. So if the boy was walking and he was quick you would say 'He was walking quickly.' (Teaching Assistant adds ly to the word quick on the white board) Pupil R, how do you walk?*

Pupil: *Quick.*

TA: *No Pupil R, in a sentence with 'ly' on the word to describe the action. (TA points to the word on the board)*

Pupil: *I walked quick.*

TA: *Don't you mean I walked quickly. (TA points to the word on the board again)*

Pupil: *Yeah I walked quick.*

TA: *Well what about Pupil 'S'. How does she walk…. with 'ly' on the end?(TA makes a slow plodding motion) Remember you have to have a 'ly' on the end of the word to describe how she walks.*

Pupil: *Slow. She walks slow.*

TA: *Slow..leee. She walks Slow leee. (TA points to the ly suffix on the board) So how does she walk?*

Pupil: *Not as quick as me*!

TA: *We will look again at these words at the end Pupil R. We have got to get on and finish this lesson and get you back in time for the end of the class lesson.*

The teaching assistant used the material in the module booklet but made no further attempts to adapt or refine the material to suit the needs of the learner. After the lesson I asked what other strategies may be used when the material in the booklet appears insufficient. The reply given by the teaching assistant was that she only had a twenty minute time allocation with the group, which was not enough to address the needs of individuals. She also directed me to the module's need for a 'Pacy approach' (ALS: 13). The classroom assistant also referred me to the ALS manual which tests the pupils at the end of the module on a list of phonics and if pupils do not achieve a pass mark on the end of module then the pupils must repeat that section of the module. This meant that if the pupil did not understand the lesson content then the pupil would repeat the work again at a later stage.

In contrast Accelerated Literacy Learning in Florida, required teachers to adapt and refine their materials to suit the needs of the learner. During all the observations made in Florida, the practices observed were similar in format. However, even though the focus of the session had an initial format, the teachers were able to change the direction of the instruction based on their professional discretion such as reinforcing a particular reading problem with a book to consolidate rather than to extend the pupils reading.

The flexibility to adapt and refine was also evident in the interview responses to answer sub-question 3. **How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?**

Question: ***Do you interpret the programme in any particular way?***

Interviewee A: *We use the policy that is state adopted but we also use an instruction that is based on our children's needs and we progress monitor this with Dibbles. We tailor our programme to the needs of the children in the room.*

Interviewee B: *Yes, we can split up our students to fit in with their interests and their levels and allow them to choose the books they can read from our programme…… We make a lot of accommodation because all of our students are different, we have ESOL. They may be reading in English but thinking in Spanish so we have to be flexible and change things to develop their understanding. This is what the programme is about. It is developing their reading not just going through the books because some children can't do that…… Each student is very different so there has to be accommodation at various levels.*

The flexibility in approach described in Florida could be interpreted as a contrast to the responses of the staff using Additional Literacy Support in England, which was applied literally. Both selected interviewees in Florida mention the individual needs of pupils in their responses. The pupil came first and the programme wherever possible fitted around the development of the pupil. Interviewee A was keen to establish that she was using the teaching techniques recommended by the district rather than the second teacher who had to interpret policy more radically due to the English as Additional Language issues with her pupils.

Theme 2: Compliance

4.8: Compliance

This section describes how the effectiveness of the programmes was perceived by the practitioners delivering it, in relation to the way they complied with the demands of ALS and ALL. This addresses sub-question 3**. How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?**

Question 4: Question: ***Does the school policy allow for flexibility adaptation or change? How is this managed?***

In dealing with the above question, the observations and interview responses revealed a fundamental difference in the way teachers and classroom assistants delivering the strategies used their professionalism. Two themes emerged from the observations and interviews which are identified as 'Compliance' and 'Technician or Professional'. The notion of 'compliance' will be examined first. In the responses to the questions in 4.4, one could take the view that classroom assistants in England, responded differently in interviews and delivered differently in practice to the teachers in Florida. The American teachers showed greater confidence and ability to answer interview questions in detail and respond more flexibly in delivery compared to the English classroom assistants.

As illustrated in responses to sub-question 1 in 4.4, the teaching assistants in England were strict in their application of teaching instructions provided in the Additional Literacy Support modules. During observations it was noted that in each session the wording of questions, the delivery of the session and the use of resources was heavily dependent on the script contained in the Additional Literacy Support manual. One could take the view that the classroom assistants were largely concerned with compliance.

The term 'compliance' used by Shain and Gleeson (1999), describes one variant of professional cultures in education in the marketised culture of the late nineties. In this study, the compliance of the teaching assistants was based on the Additional Literacy Support programme ensuring a uniform response to the instructions in the ALS handbook rather than meeting the needs of

individual pupils. The issue of compliance and professional identity echoes the work of Menter (1997) which was also outlined in 1.5.

The next set of interview responses attempt to draw out the perceptions of the classroom assistants to their observed compliance. This addresses sub-question 3**. How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?**

Question 4: ***Does the school policy allow for flexibility adaptation or change? How is this managed?***

Interviewee 1: *We were just told that this is what we had to do as part of the Literacy Strategy which was the law……. each lesson was set out for you so if you had six children in the group and one did not understand it, then you just had to go on to the next lesson if the other five could do it. We just went through the programme.*

Interviewee 2***:*** *No… nothing… we weren't supposed to do anything ourselves…… just follow what was in the module books.*

I followed up the responses which demonstrated a determination to comply with their perceived understanding of policy with the next question.

Question: ***Why did you not adapt the lessons at all?***

Interviewee 2: *I wasn't sure if we were allowed to change anything….. I didn't want to get anything wrong…. I had to fill in an evaluation sheet at the end to show that I had done it right.*

Interviewee 3: *We were told on the ALS course that this fitted in with the literacy hour……. and that is what we were supposed to do.*

Compliance is evident in these responses and appears to be based on a fear of not delivering the programme in the correct manner. As the teaching assistants were newly recruited for the purpose of the delivery of Additional Literacy Support, I can only speculate on the motives for their

compliance. There appears to be a fear of deviating from the handbook instructions which may reflect a lack of expertise to take responsibility and teach to the needs of the pupils. However, all the teaching assistants had previous experience in working with below average readers and pupils on the SEN register before they were assigned to Additional Literacy Support. They had developed a variety of strategies and techniques which could be used to help children improve their reading skills. One could take the view from these responses that the perception of the teaching assistants demonstrated a desire to be seen to be following the programme. This theme of compliance is developed in the next set of responses investigating the reluctance to adapt or refine practice to suit the needs of the learner.

Question: ***Did you use any of your own subject knowledge and experience to meet the needs of individuals?***

Interviewee 1: *I didn't want to do anything different with it, I didn't really feel qualified to do anything different and if I stuck to what was in the manual then I couldn't be criticised.*

Interviewee 3*: Not really. Our head wanted me to cover the work in the module. I have had special needs children before, for reading…. But we didn't use many of the things we had used before when we were doing the ALS….*

Rather than use their knowledge, skills and experience to adapt, refine or deviate from the programme, the classroom assistants showed a reluctance to make any modifications to the programme. One could take the view that there seemed to be an irrational conformity in their determination to be seen to be following policy. One could also argue that the concept of '*instrumental rationality'* as described by Habermas (1984) can be seen in their responses. In this case instrumental rationality is seen in the justification of their reluctance to change their approach

because of their adherence to a given job or task. One could assume that the interface between pupil and practitioner seems to have been distorted in terms of importance, with adherence to the programme becoming a higher priority than the use of the skills of the instructor to meet the needs of individual pupils.

Theme 3: Technician or Professional?

4.9: Technician or Professional?

The next interview question, *Was any of your own subject knowledge and experience used to modify the programme?* was posed in order to develop the perceptions of the classroom assistants in England as to their role as professional or technician. This question was a development of question 4: *How open is ALS to interpretation by practitioner in order to respond to the needs of the pupils?*

Question: Was any of your own subject knowledge and experience used to modify the programme?

Interviewee 1***:*** *No. It was all set out for you to do, lesson by lesson. I didn't want to do anything different with it.*

Interviewee 2: *No….. We were told we must do exactly what was in the module handbook.*

A theme of behaving as a technician emerged from the observations and interviews conducted in England. The response of the teaching assistants revealed a reluctance to use any of their own subject knowledge. This prevented a more tactical response to the needs of the learners. From their responses, one might conclude that the responsibility for the progress of the pupils is deflected from themselves as instructors, to the programme as the vehicle for improvement. The compliance and role of technician rather than teacher has marginalised their input and

professionalism as there is a lack of confidence shown to use any of their own experience against the perceived wisdom of The National Literacy Strategy. Menter (1997) also outlines this notion that control over study content and procedures leads to:

> 'foster a system of preferred attitudinal disposition and uncritical technical skills' (Menter, 1997:24).

Florida

In responding to the same question in Florida, there is a marked contrast in the approach towards pedagogy practiced by the teachers.

Question 4: ***How open is ALL to interpretation by practitioner in order to respond to the needs of the pupils?***

In all six observations in Florida, teachers exercised a level of professional discretion. Each lesson, although using a similar format, was unique to the stage of development in reading of the pupil at that time. The variable element throughout was the individual needs of the pupils and the ability of the teacher to respond as a professional. The training and resources equipped teachers with the skills and flexibility to respond to the needs of the pupils.

The fifth observation in Florida was an example of the professionalism of the teacher as the pupil being taught had a hearing aid and the teacher modified her instruction accordingly. Here the teacher anticipated the difficulty of a phonological approach and shaped her lesson on visual picture cues as well as using sign language. The teacher had made this judgement on her knowledge of the child and the context of what the child already understood.

The sixth observation was also an example of teacher professionalism as the pupil being taught was a recent migrant to Florida and English was his second language. The skills of the trained teacher were apparent in this session as she was able to converse in Spanish when the pupil struggled with basic vocabulary. Picture cues and flash cards were used to extend vocabulary and establish meaning and understanding. This particular pupil was given a parallel reading book at the end of the session to consolidate the teaching undertaken that day.

All six sessions demonstrated the professional skills of the teachers delivering short but focussed lessons which addressed the child's individual difficulties. Sixteen out of eighteen of the pupils observed were able to demonstrate a good understanding of the text in comprehension questions at the end of the session. The two pupils mentioned above were able to demonstrate skills acquired over the previous days.

There was also effective individual progression evident in the way that the pupils were able to take home a more advanced text which dealt with more complex vocabulary to be addressed the following day. The children reacted positively to ALL by demonstrating enjoyment and enthusiasm to understanding the text and empathising with the characters in the story. The improvement of the pupils was reinforced with positive praise given by the teachers who concluded the sessions by explaining their expectations and targets for the pupils' improvement and engagement with their homework texts. During the semi-structured interviews I asked:

Question: ***Was any of your own subject knowledge and experience used to modify the programme?***

Interviewee B: *Yes we can change and make the programme more flexible because third grade is such a high stakes test year and if they don't pass the FCAT then they can be kept behind. We took a class of at risk second graders and put them in a class of eight with a classroom assistant and*

put in the acceleration strategy to make sure they had a good chance of getting their grades on the FCAT. They are also entitled to a before school and after school input.

Interviewee C: *When I was teaching in Orange county we got a grant called 'Literacy First' and it provided us with some in depth training which has helped me to develop different strategies for the children in my group… so I can recognise similar problems and can use my training to deal with them when they come up…I am constantly learning……. I use a lot of outside resources not just what the school has given me. There is flexibility so good teachers can use their knowledge.*

Both teachers appeared to have the confidence to adapt and refine ALL strategies to address the needs of each pupil and enable the pupils to achieve an appropriate grade in FCAT in order to progress to the next academic year. The emphasis in the responses was still test score orientated, but flexibility was shown in the professionalism of the teachers to adjust their approach in order to achieve the desired outcomes and address the needs of individuals at the same time.

The responses given by the teachers in Florida reveal more of a 'Strategic Compliance' which, according to Shain and Gleeson (1999:456) is more common than straightforward compliance. The concept of strategic compliance denotes responses to policy that are more strongly influenced by an education and professional culture. The teachers in Florida typically asserted their existing values and professional practices. As Shain and Gleeson conclude:

> 'Strategic compliers adopt a strategic view whereby they are able to offer `alternative' measures within the system, to ensure that quality education is provided to a range of students' (Shain and Gleeson, 1999: 456 & 458).

The responses in Florida and England were different. In England the classroom assistants showed a greater reliance on the Additional Literacy Support programme and demonstrated a reluctance to

adapt the strategy for fear of '*doing something wrong'* (Interviewee 1). The interview responses indicated that the success of Additional Literacy Support would be attributed to the strength of the programme itself, whereas Accelerated Literacy Learning would succeed or fail on the strength of the teachers and their ability to meet the needs of the individual within an overall policy.

Theme 4: Outcomes of Strategies in Test Score Data

4.10: Outcomes of strategies in test score data

This section addresses sub-question 2**. What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?**

When considering the test score data, I acknowledge that there is an imbalance in number of test scores reported. The imbalance is because the data collected in England was collected over a four year period reflecting the two years when the cohort were on the Additional Literacy Support programme and a further two years leading up to the pupils taking their Year Six SATs. The point of the test score data in England is to show outcomes in Year six which was the measuring point of government literacy policy to achieve 80% level 4 or above in year six SATs by 2002. The results are also presented in the context of the support provided over the four year period as demonstrated in the table on the next page.

However, the test scores in Florida reflect the progress of the pupils one year after finishing their Accelerated Literacy Learning programme because the programme addresses requirements of Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). Therefore the test scores reported identify whether progress was maintained the year following intervention. As the test scores reported in England are over a longer period and deal with three sub-groups, the support given to the groups needs to be identified in order to present a more clear understanding of the effect of the intervention on test scores.

Table 2: ALS Table of support 2000- 2003

Year 3 ALS group (2000)	Group support 20 minutes daily intervention.
Year 3 Non-ALS whole class (2000)	Whole class teaching. No additional support.
Year 3 Discontinued(2000)	Whole class teaching. No additional support
Year 4 ALS group (2001)	Group support 20 minutes daily intervention.
Year 4 Non-ALS whole class (2001)	Whole class teaching. No additional support.
Year 4 Discontinued (2001)	Whole class teaching. No additional support
Year 5 ALS group (2002)	Whole class teaching. No additional support.
Year 5 Non-ALS whole class (2002)	Whole class teaching. No additional support
Year 5 Discontinued (2002)	Whole class teaching. No additional support.
Year 6 ALS group (2003)	Smaller classes for 0.3 of the timetable.
Year 6 Non-ALS whole class (2003)	Smaller classes for 0.3 of the timetable.
Year 6 Discontinued (2003)	Smaller classes for 0.3 of the week

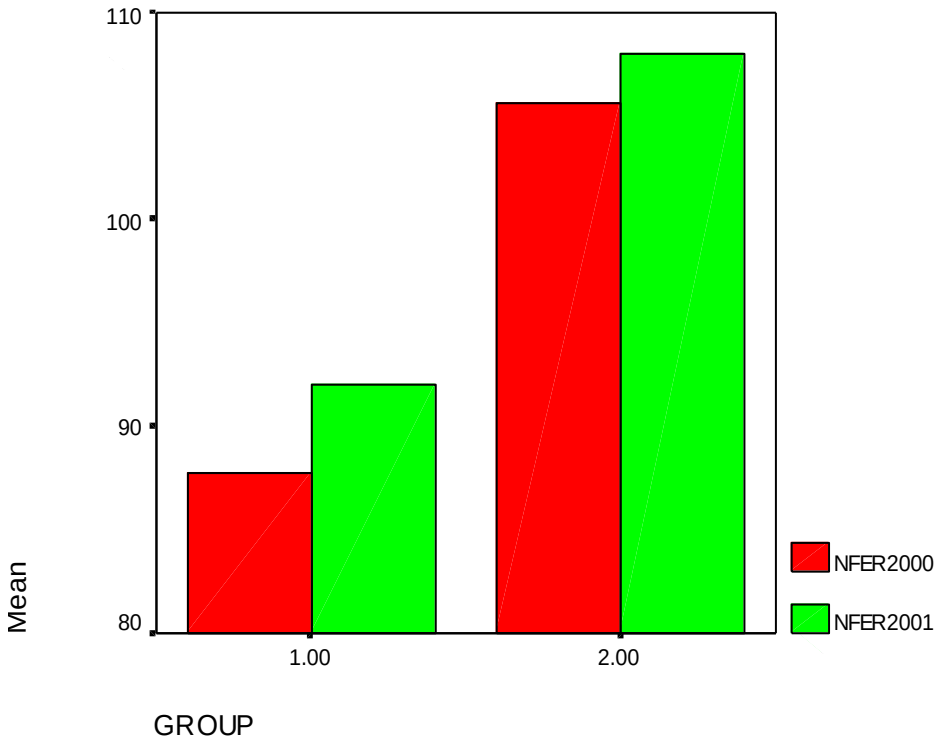
Although the following test score data does not provide a direct year by year comparison, it does encapsulate how the programmes have been measured through standardised tests. The quantitative data reported in the following results is based on the study sample and described in Chapter 3.14 and 3.17.

4.11: Results in England for children who scored 2C and below in Key Stage 1 SATs

The first set of results looks at the difference in NFER English standardised scores for pupils who scored 2C and below between 2000 and 2001. The reason for examining this time period is that the Additional Literacy Support programme was designed to be administered and be effective over a two year period in Years 3 and 4. These two-yearly results examine outcomes on pupil scores in reading whilst the Additional Literacy Support programme was actively being taught to Group 1. In contrast, Group 2 refers to the children who scored 2C and below in their Key Stage 1 SATs but

who did not receive Additional Literacy Support. The comparison of these two groups highlights the effects which the Additional Literacy Support programme intervention has achieved with Group 1 compared to no intervention at all for Group 2. Bars in red refer to results in 2000. Bars in green refer to results in 2001. As explained in Chapter 3, NFER Reading test scores were used by the school as a measurement of progress and provide numerical data which can be readily disaggregated.

Chart 1: Bar chart of mean comparison of NFER reading scores 2000, 2001 for ALS (Group 1.00) and Non ALS (Group 2.00)



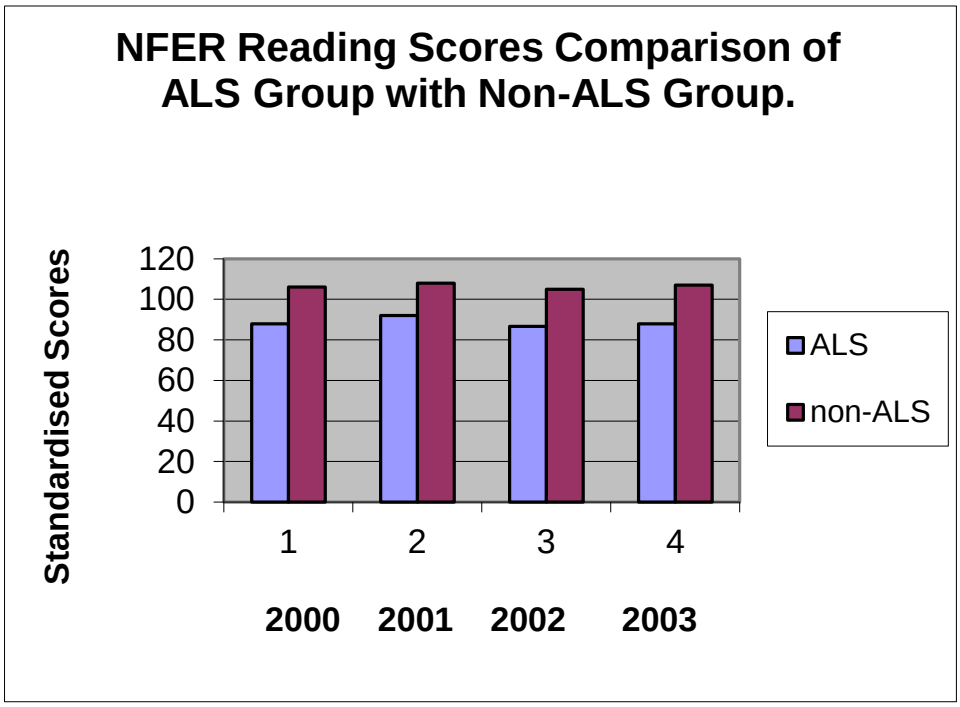
The above bar chart (fig 1) shows a significant difference in the mean scores between the two groups. The children in Group 1 scored significantly lower than the children in Group 2. This is due to the original starting points of both groups being different. The pupils receiving Additional

Literacy Support intervention (Group 1) had lower NFER reading scores to start with than Group 2 who only narrowly missed out on gaining a level 2C in their Year 2 SATs.

Both groups also show a steady improvement in results. However in 2001, through participation in the Additional Literacy Support, Group 1 show a mean improvement of +4 from 88 to 92, whilst Group 2 (the Non-Additional Literacy Support) show a mean improvement of +2 from a standardized score of 106 to 108. This shows some narrowing of the gap for the children on the Additional Literacy Support programme.

Chart 2 below follows the progress of the same two groups in terms of NFER test scores over a four year period. This is to record the progression of results to see if the Additional Literacy Support programme had sustained the modest gains made over the first two years. The four year period may also give some indication of the likelihood of the Additional Literacy Support pupils (Group 1) reaching government targets of Level 4 in English SATs by 2002.

Chart 2: Bar chart of mean comparison of NFER Reading scores over a four year period 2000-2003, Group 1 (ALS) and Group 2 (Non-ALS)



The above bar chart indicates that the difference in scores between the two groups is maintained at the end of the four year period. Both groups also show improvement in 2000 and 2001 in Year 3 and Year 4 as reported in the previous bar chart. However in Year 5 in 2002, there is a drop in the scores for both groups. The Non-Additional Literacy Support group (Group 2) average score drops -2 from 108 to 106 over the year and reverts back to its original average score for Year 3 achieved in 2000.

The Additional Literacy Support group (Group 1) drop -5.25 to 86.75 which was even lower than their Year 3 score. The drop in scores coincides with the ending of the Additional Literacy Support programme.

In Year 5, as indicated in Table 2, there was no additional intervention or support provided to Group 1 pupils who were previously dependent on receiving Additional Literacy Support. In Year 5, Group 1 children received the same Literacy Hour along with the rest of the class.

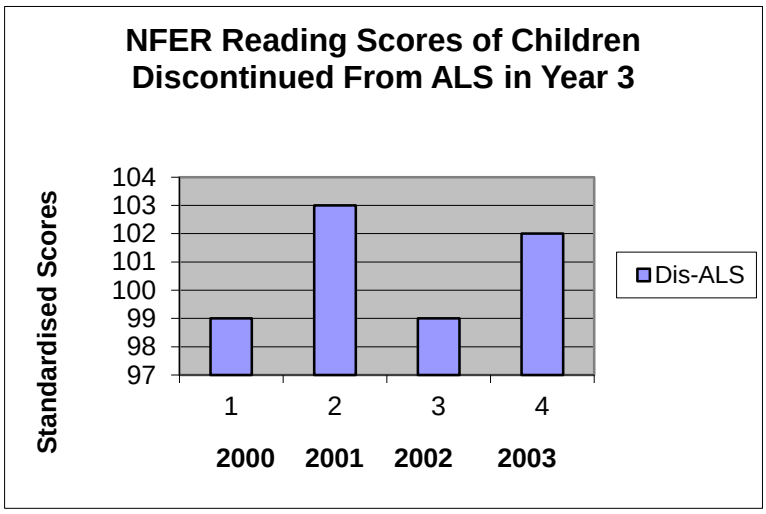
In 2003, the children who had taken part in the Additional Literacy Support programme had reached Year 6 and took their Key Stage 2 SAT for reading. This was the year which policy had been geared towards in terms of an 80% at level 4 success rate. In Year 6, the Additional Literacy Support group (Group 1) average score was 88, which was a slight increase on Year 5 result of 86 in 2002 but was exactly the same score as their starting point in Year 3 when the programme began. The Non-Additional Literacy Support group (Group 2) averaged 107 which was an overall -1 point from their Year 3 initial starting point.

There were again some external factors which may explain these scores as outlined in Table 2. The whole year group had received some additional teaching support in the shape of an eight week block in the spring term where the two original classes were split into three groups for 0.3 of the week (three mornings) and were streamed according to ability. This additional support has traditionally been employed in order to prepare children for their Key Stage 2 SATs and give teachers opportunity to target individuals to improve their individual scores. Pupils from Group 1 were put in to the smallest group during this period before Year 6 SATs.

Chart 3 examines the children who were initially involved in the Additional Literacy Support programme during Year 3. They completed the module successfully and were able to complete the end of module test and leave the programme during Year 3. An examination of this group was made because the policy for Additional Literacy Support specifically targeted these just below average readers. Having achieved the exit markers for the programme the progress of these pupils

(Group 3) would provide a further indication of the success of Additional Literacy Support compared to those not on the programme.

Chart 3: NFER reading scores of children discontinued from ALS in Year 3 (Group 3)



The children who were able to exit the programme by completing the Additional Literacy Support flow chart by the end of Year 3 were tracked over a four year period. Following their discontinuation, this group managed average standardised scores of 99 in 2000, 103 in 2001, followed by 99 in 2002 and 102 in 2003. The same pattern of a drop in scores in Year 5 (2002) is followed by an increase in Year 6 to accompany the smaller class and extra support given before SATs. All the children in this sub-group eventually achieved a level 4 in their overall English SAT in 2003. By doing this they achieved the class average. This sub-group was thought to be just below average at Year 2 and were the type of pupils targeted by policy. They did not receive any additional help after their short programme of Additional Literacy Support in Year 3. This set of results could be interpreted as a success for the programme as the children were successfully integrated back in to main whole class teaching. However, the children involved in the

discontinued group were considered by in-house teacher assessments to have underperformed in their Year 2 SATs.

Chart 4: Year 6 Reading SAT results: ALS, Non-ALS and discontinued from ALS

Chart 4 compares the outcomes in Key Stage 2 Reading SATs of the Additional Literacy Support group, the discontinued ALS group and the children who did not receive support but scored below 2C in KS1 SATs. This chart looks at the outcomes in terms of SAT levels and shows the results of the three groups as percentages of pupils achieving levels 2, 3, 4 and 5.

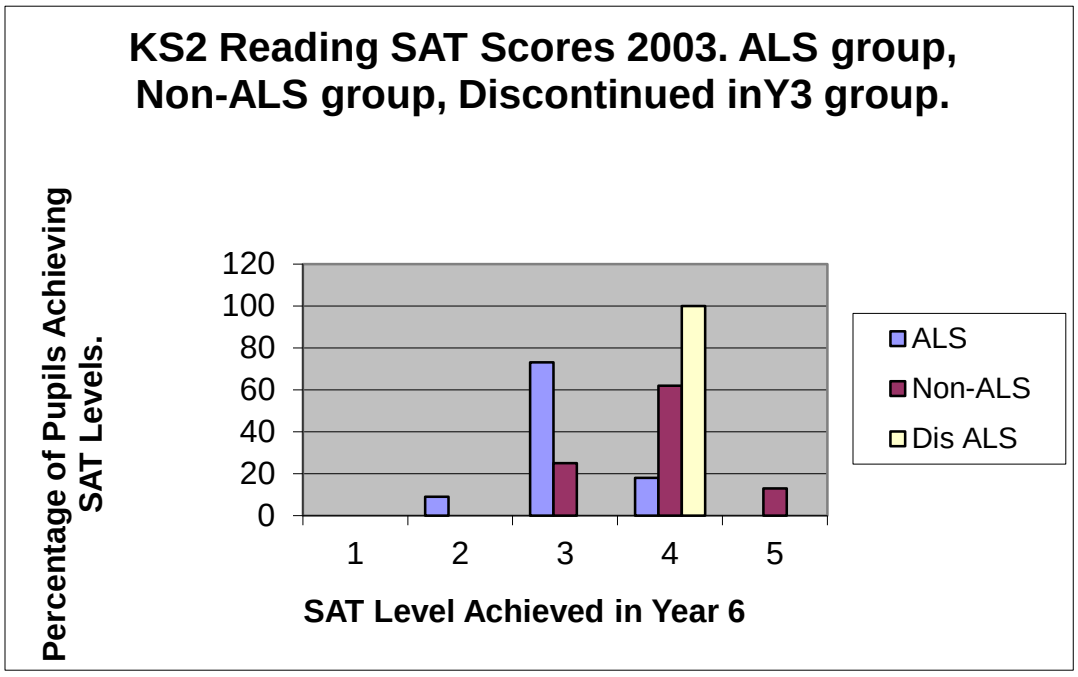


Chart 4 shows that in Group 1 (Additional Literacy Support) 18% of the children who received the full Additional Literacy Support programme over Years 3 and 4 achieved the policy objective of

level 4 in their Year Six SAT. Within this same group, 73% achieved level 3 and 9% were marked at level 2.

These results would suggest that the policy objective of level 4 and above was not successful for the majority of the children placed on the programme as they failed to make up the ground from their initial low starting points. The intervention had not narrowed the gap enough with their peers to obtain level 4.

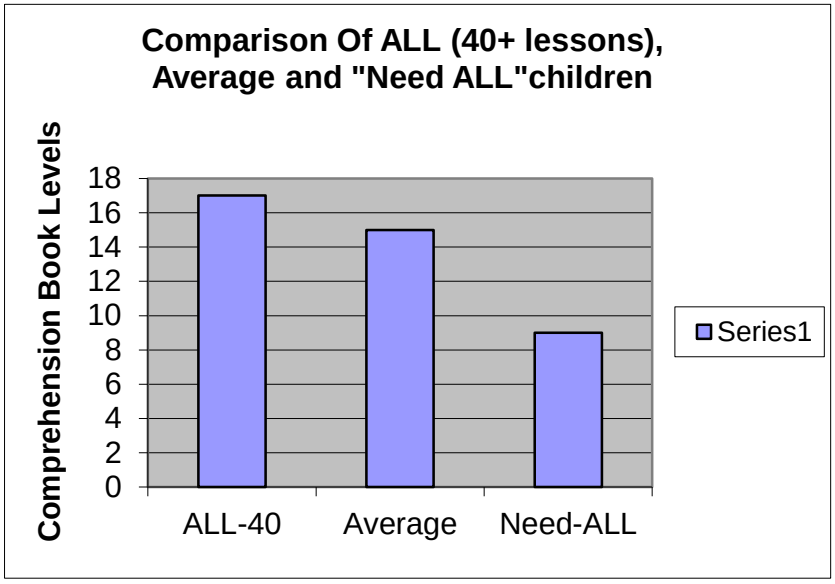
Chart 4 shows that in Group 2 (Non-Additional Literacy Support Pupils 2C and below at Year 2 but were not on the Additional Literacy Support programme) scored 25% at level 3 and 62% at level 4 and 13% at level 5. These results suggest that the 25% who did not achieve the level 4 policy objective may have indeed benefited from inclusion in the programme as their scores were consistently below average throughout the three years of the study.

Chart 4 shows that in Group 3 (Discontinued from Additional Literacy Support at Year 3) all pupils achieved level 4 in their 2003 Year 6 Reading SAT. This 100% result indicates that the targeting of this 'just below average' group with the Additional Literacy Support programme did have some effect in achieving the policy objective as the above group of similarly placed children who did not receive the support only achieved a 75% success rate.

4.12: Test results of Accelerated Literacy Learning

In Florida, for the purpose of collecting test score data, I studied the scores in one school over a two year period 2001 to 2003. The first year the children received the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme. After Accelerated Literacy Learning had finished in the second year, the test score data was recorded by the school to determine the more lasting effects of the programme. The following results refer to the study sample described in Chapter 3.

Chart 5: Comparison of ALL children, class average children and children requiring ALL



The above chart shows how twenty seven children in the Accelerated Literacy Learning group (ALL-40) who had received over forty sessions of Accelerated Literacy Learning scored above the level of the average pupil in the same school year on the Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 1997) in 2000. The Developmental Reading Assessment was used to determine both word accuracy and reading comprehension. Results from this assessment were used to compare the comprehension performance levels for Accelerated Literacy Learning groups. The book level refers to the graded comprehension books. Figure 5 shows that the ALL-40 pupils were graded at comprehension level 17 whereas the class average was only level 15. Pupils of a similar ability to the ALL-40 Group but did not receive any Accelerated Literacy Learning intervention fell behind the class average and only scored level 9. So pupils of similar ability at the age of six had now become 8 comprehension levels different by the age of eight. One could interpret the data as indicating that the Accelerated Literacy Learning intervention programme was successful in the

longer term as the data indicates that the pupils were above the other two groups a whole year after completing the programme.

Wahl's 2002 study of Accelerated Literacy Learning concluded that there were many observable strengths of the programme which underpin the relative success in terms of test scores. The results in this study recorded from a school in the county, agree with Wahl's findings and demonstrate an increase in the comprehension book levels to an average of 17 which overshadow the class average of 15 for pupils who initially scored higher. In terms of results one could assume that the ALL programme was particularly effective with the pupils in Florida.

4.13: The effect of ALS and ALL on test scores and feedback to inform future policy development

Having presented the test results, the final part of this chapter will examine whether test score data or teacher feedback was used to inform developments in pedagogy. This addresses sub-question **2. What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?**

The question examines whether the Whole Language approach in Florida or the phonics-based approach in England was deemed to be effective. The above question was modified slightly to fit the context of an interview question with the practitioners in England and Florida. The first responses are taken from interviews with the classroom assistants in England.

Question: ***What did you do with the results of your Additional Literacy Support work?***

Interviewee 2: *I didn't do anything with the results. I just tested the children at the end of the modules and they went back to class once they had got through the modules.*

Interviewee 3: *I taught all the ALS lessons and most of my group did OK… they passed the phonics test at the time, but then some forgot… two didn't pass but they were SEN and had quite a few other problems anyway.*

From the responses given regarding use of the test score data, it appears that the classroom assistants were not aware of any immediate feedback loop which would be used to inform future development of pedagogy. There was no awareness of what happens to the test scores or how effective the phonics based approach had been.

In contrast, the following extracts reveal that the American teachers were acutely aware of what happens to their test scores and how this would impact on the children, the school and ultimately themselves as individuals.

Question: ***What did you do with the results of your Accelerated Literacy Learning work?***

Interviewee A: *All of our grades are looked at by the directors of the school and reported to the district against the state standards. The district monitors our grades and if they think things need changing they can come in and do a fidelity check and make sure we are following the policy or suggest ways that we can improve things. The district has to report the results to the state and if the policy ain't working then they'll come up with a new one.*

Interviewee B: *Our scores are taken in by the district and if our students don't get the state standards then the school is given further fidelity checks and can be put in to corrective action. It doesn't matter how difficult our students find it to achieve the standards the state standards have to be met and if the students don't achieve them then we are made responsible.*

The interviews reveal an understanding by the teachers that scores are used to monitor the progress of the students and if the scores do not reach an acceptable standard then the district will look closely at school practice and perform a 'fidelity check' which is a short inspection. If the policy

does not produce the required test score levels to meet state standards, then practice is reviewed. There is also a confidence in the effectiveness of the ALL approach demonstrated in their responses about how well their pupils have achieved in test scores the following year.

4.14: Conclusion

The aim of this results chapter was to respond to the main research question and sub-questions The themes of compliance and roles of technician and professional were unintended outcomes of the research process but have become central themes in answering sub-question 3 and explaining how effective the practice worked in both settings.

The results in this chapter indicate a relatively successful intervention programme being pursued in Florida. The results in England present a more inconsistent performance through observations interviews and test scores. Elements not included in the main research question are notions of effectiveness on the grounds of cost and sustainability which may provide a different perspective to why certain practices were observed during the study.

Chapter 5: Analysis of the data

5.0 Introduction

This analysis chapter will reflect on the previous Descriptive Findings chapter by exploring in more detail the themes of:

Theme 1: Practice in the context of policy.

Theme 2: Compliance.

Theme 3: Technician or professional?

Theme 4: Outcomes in test score data.

5.1 Practice in the context of policy

The above theme reported in the findings chapter addressed sub-question 1 of the research:

1**. What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?**

In order to address the results-led agenda, the observations and interviews in the previous Descriptive Findings chapter indicate that English and American practitioners approached practice in two different ways.

England

The English approach for Additional Literacy Support was rooted in a phonics based instruction as supported by Chall (1989) and Adams (1990). As outlined in 2.1, this theory argues that letter sound correlation is the best way to teach reading. This section analyses the data from observations and interviews which indicates the form of the pedagogy observed in ALS. As outlined in 3.11, Wragg's analysis model (1994) has been used to group recurring critical events which led to patterns in the phonics-led pedagogy. The patterns of pedagogy were: Teacher led instruction,

Repetitive Format, Lack of focus on context, and Teaching to the checklist. The first three patterns are described below.

Teacher-led instruction, Repetitive format, Lack of focus on context.

Analysis of the observations outlined in 4.4 revealed a style of pedagogy which relied on a rigidly structured lesson format. This format consisted of a hierarchy of phonics, taught over four modules, which ensured that sound to letter correspondence was reinforced. The recurring patterns of pedagogy were based on a teacher-led direct instruction model. Each module handbook contained tightly scripted lesson plans which involved the teacher demonstrating the letter sound correspondence to the pupils. These teacher-led instructions were faithfully adhered to by the teaching assistants. The instruction appeared to be effective in helping the pupils to memorise and match the letter sound correspondence. However not all letter sound correspondences were retained by the pupils at the end of the module. This was not viewed as unsuccessful by the ALS programme because the end of module test only required 75% retention in order for pupils to progress to the next module.

The phonics-led pedagogy was accompanied by a repetitive format. The reason for this style of pedagogy is due to the prescription of each lesson in the ALS manual and the limitations of a twenty minute per day time allocation. Time limitation meant that there were no opportunities in the sessions for the pupils share interest or experience with the classroom assistants neither was it encouraged as indicated in the following comment:

Interviewee 2: *I was just given guidelines to follow in the manual and I stuck to them…. it was phonics mainly…sounding out words, getting the children to recognise how the sounds were represented by the letters.*

On analysing the observation data a repetitive format for sessions included: a revision of a sound by saying the word, followed by examples of how that sound was represented and finally the pupils traced over the corresponding letters in a set of words which contained the same sound. In all of the observed sessions, the context for the sound was a picture which the pupils would be allowed to colour in later in the session or for homework. This was accompanied by a homework sheet which went through the same process with the same sound but with different words and pictures. The pupils observed during the observations reacted in two ways to the repetitive format. Firstly they appeared secure in the predictability of the sessions and secondly their focus was on the reward of colouring in matching phonics on the worksheet. As indicated in 2.5 the drill and practice approach is much criticised by the likes of Goouch and Lambirth (2012) and Meek (1987) as misunderstanding the purpose of reading which is to make sense of the words. The theoretical argument as to whether this was effective practice could be viewed as successful in that the pupils were accurate in matching letters and sounds but unsuccessful in providing real context for their acquisition of new words. The test score data in 4.10 supports the observation data that pupils struggled on the comprehension elements of standardised tests. The ALS programme enabled pupils to recognise phonics and read words but did not extend their ability to comprehension. The criteria for success was the reading and spelling of selected words at the end of an ALS module. This did not equate to success in broader tests of reading such as NFER or SATs.

Doing the job required: Teaching to the checklist

An analysis of the interview responses revealed that the teaching assistants perceived that the style of pedagogy required to deliver ALS was only concerned with fulfilling the requirements for

pupils to be able to replicate their letter to sound knowledge on a twenty word test at the end of the module.

Interviewee 3: *We went back on stuff from year one and two that the children did not get, or missed first time…. phonics mostly….. We just went over the lessons in the manual one after another revising a lot of the sounds the children didn't understand in year two. The children do this until they can pass the test at the end of the module.*

Interviewee 2: *The children do this until they can pass the test at the end of the module.*

The results reported in research indicate that the teaching assistants were teaching to the checklist. The style of teaching also demonstrated an over-reliance on phonics as a way to teach reading. This was seen consistent across all of the observations even when it appeared to be ineffective. As discussed in 2.5, Meek (1982) considered that the theory of teaching reading through phonics was easier for insecure and inexperienced teachers to 'understand and administer' (1982:74) but would disaffect pupils who did not see the advantage of learning sounds. This was demonstrated in Chapter 4.7 where the pupil was being taught the spelling of adverbs. The spelling of adverbs appeared straight forward through simply adding ly. However the use of adverbs proved too difficult for the pupil to apply. This point was not pursued by the teaching assistant because the end of module test only required the pupils to spell the word and not apply it. Analysis of the interview data reveals that this was because it was exactly what they were told to do on their training course as indicated in this representative extract:

Interviewee 2: *No we did literally what was in the book….. I did it exactly as I was told to do on the course and by the teacher….just what was in the book really.*

In terms of analysing this checklist mentality evident in the interview responses, Goouch and Lambirth (2011) argue that when test scores become the focus of teaching, a teacher's work is reduced to an efficient delivery of ways to pass the test. This is what was observed in the ALS programme in this study which equates success in reading to the passing of tests at the end of each module and describes its teaching methods as 'efficient' (ALS: 3). As mentioned in 2.5a Goouch and Lambirth (2011) believe that the theory behind phonics being the most effective way to teach children to read meets the current demand from governments with limited information for simple solutions and easily measurable tests.

From the viewpoint of the teaching assistants it appeared appropriate to accept this prescribed pedagogy as this may lead to higher test scores. The teaching assistants could also deflect blame for pupils not improving in reading by claiming that they were following a nationally imposed process. This notion is fully discussed in Chapter 6.3.

From a government perspective the ALS model may appear to be efficient in teaching reading, through a phonics theory to check a limited number of words, but as mentioned in 2.5a could be challenged by supporters of Whole Language theory such as Goswami (2007) as missing the point the purpose of reading which is to appropriate meaning.

Florida

As mentioned in 2.7e the ALL approach to the teaching of reading in Florida has its roots in Whole Language theory as supported by Goodman (1980). This theory argues that learning to read is a process promoted by natural engagement with language. In Whole Language theory, children progress from knowing the alphabet to being able to read whole words. If a word was unfamiliar then it could be identified accurately through the use of context clues. In this study, the Whole

Language theory approach of ALL with the emphasis on child-centred teaching rather than knowledge, as outlined in 2.6, had a positive effect on the reading test scores over a two-year period. As indicated in 4.10 the test scores demonstrated significant improvement by pupils engaged in ALL compared to pupils with similar reading profiles who did not receive ALL. When examining the practice in Florida, the observational data revealed that the successful pedagogy included the following elements:

1. **Rehearsal**: Pupils re-read the book before the session with the teacher
2. **Emotional Response:** Teachers initially talking to pupils about their reading experience e.g. the characters they liked in the stories, the emotions in the story and the feelings of the reader.
3. **Recap**: Recapping on any difficult words on which the pupils struggled
4. **Recording:** Teachers making running records of any difficulties
5. **Meaning**: Asking comprehension questions during and after the reading
6. **Consolidation**: Pupils consolidated their learning by demonstrating their new knowledge at the end of the session
7. **Progression:** Concluding by selecting a book from a graded scheme which contained words which the child had learnt and been taught to overcome.

The analysis of the ALL sessions revealed that the pedagogy was wide-ranging in all observations and used a variety of successful elements including the techniques listed above. The differences arose from the individual difficulties displayed by the pupils, which is a natural consequence of a Whole Language approach as Wahl states:

> ‘Teacher input into ALL will be directly related to the needs and level of the student’ (Wahl, 2002: 3).

The pupils had their individual needs supported in their development in reading with bespoke strategies appropriate to their needs which was demonstrated in the example shown in 4.9 with a pupil with hearing difficulties.

The analysis of the observations revealed that the ALL sessions demonstrated principles of Whole Language theory in terms of rehearsal, experience and meaning.

Rehearsal and emotional response

The pupils re-read their story books before the teaching input and were then ready to discuss their opinions about the characters in the book and the emotions which they evoked. Here the link to meaning was explicit. The purpose of the session was about understanding the text. A brief rehearsal before the session enabled the pupils to be more prepared for the text in anticipation of the teaching. The rehearsal also allowed the pupils time to think and refresh their feelings about characters in the text and consider their responses to the actions of the characters. The emotional response demonstrated by the pupils during observations led to a greater engagement in the meaning of the text as the pupils were able to give animated answers regarding their likes and dislikes of characters in the story and their opinions of what might happen to them.

The data in this study directly refers to the theoretical basis for Whole Language theory as outlined by Goodman (1986) in 2.4 where the written language is regarded as a symbolic way of communication. In terms of an emotional response the data in this study shows pupils making sense of the text in a way which enabled them to form opinions about characters in the story. The transition from symbol to emotion in turn had an effect on their ability to respond to more

inferential and deductive comprehension questions in reading tests because they had a greater understanding of meaning.

Recording and recap

Each ALL session featured the teachers making running records of any difficulties the pupils had encountered. The running records were then used the following day to recap on those difficulties. The observational analysis demonstrated that recording was a recurring pattern which enabled pupils to consolidate progress on any particular difficulties they encountered. This led to greater confidence when pupils did attempt to read their selected text. The anticipation of the difficulty had taken away the stumbling blocks in the text from the pupils which consequently led to greater fluency. Theoretically the recap and anticipation of any difficulties in the text linked to the notion of context in Whole Language theory as the pupils were able to recognise the new words rehearsed in the context of the whole text.

Meaning and consolidation

As outlined in 2.4, Goouch and Lambirth (2011) argue that the concept of teaching reading through Whole Language theory relies on the principle that reading is about understanding and meaning. In this respect the teachers using ALL consistently referred to the meaning of the text and checked the pupils understanding with a consistent use of comprehension questions throughout the sessions observed. This technique proved effective because pupils were able to demonstrate their understanding of the text at the end of the session. The level of understanding also translated in to test scores which show comprehension book grades as two levels higher than the class average two academic years after the start of the ALL programme. The regular use of comprehension questions throughout the sessions meant that pupils were continually drawn back to making sense of the text rather than just decoding the words on a page. This relates directly to

Whole Language theory as outlined in 2.4 where Geekie *et al* (1999) argue that learning to read relies heavily on a meaningful interaction with the teacher about the text rather than instruction on decoding.

Progression

The performance of the pupils during the session allowed the teachers to use their professional judgement on whether the pupils needed to be given a more difficult reading book to take home to read or whether to take a book of a similar level to consolidate their knowledge. The analysis of the observations connects with constructivist view held by supporters of Whole Language theory that children acquire knowledge by reorganising what they already know about the world. In the analysis of ALL in this study, reading was more about acquiring meaning than a perceptual process of decoding. The findings in this study agree with studies by Anderson & Pearson (1984) in reading comprehension which support the theory that meaning is the essential component of effective reading. This data supports the notion outlined in 2.4 by Bruner (1996) where pupils acquire knowledge by reorganising what they understand in this case new vocabulary related to a particular text.

5.2 Compliance

The above theme emerged from findings chapter in order to address sub-question 3:

How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?

5.2(a) Compliance in England

An analysis of the observations and interviews with the teaching assistants in England revealed a propensity to comply in detail with their task. As detailed in 4.8, the insistence on complying with

the detailed lesson plans could be at the expense of pupils' learning. The observational analysis revealed that the twenty minutes time allocation the rigidly scripted lesson format did not allow for any adaptation to suit the needs of the pupils.

The classroom assistants adhered to their instructions in a manner Habermas (1984) described as 'Instrumental Rationality' as detailed in 4.8. The fear of doing something wrong appears to undermine the core objective of addressing the needs of the pupils as shown in the following response:

Interviewee 1: *I didn't want to do anything different with it, I didn't really feel qualified to do anything different and if I stuck to what was in the manual then I couldn't be criticised.*

Responses collated from this research indicate that there are limits to what efficiency and adherence to a set programme can do. The interviews in Chapter 4.8 revealed that the teaching assistants were encouraged to follow the manual to the letter in content and action as demonstrated with the following reply:

Interviewee 1: *No we were just told that this is what we had to do as part of the literacy strategy which was the law……. each lesson was set out for you so if you had six children in the group and one did not understand it, then you just had to go on to the next lesson just as long as the other five could do it. We just went through the programme.*

The teaching assistants were unable, reluctant and at times scared to deviate from their instruction. Their role models in the classroom in the form of teachers in England were also teaching by prescription at the time with the National Literacy Strategy. Menter comments that:

> 'For the New Right teachers may be seen as unproblematic technicians producing the new labour force' (Menter, 1997:131).

In this respect the teaching assistants believed that compliance was the best way to be perceived as doing a proficient job.

One could raise the question: What do the findings in the theme compliance mean in this study? The evidence suggests that, while the teaching assistants can in theory exercise some form of professional autonomy in their daily working lives, in practice the ability to make professional judgements and prioritise tasks based on those judgements is heavily circumscribed. The need to account for one's actions on a regular basis, alongside the accounting process has had the effect of eradicating professional discretion. Whether or not prioritising judgements were ever fully devolved is open to question, but nevertheless, the capacity to make choices is perceived as restricted by the teaching assistants

I was not able to observe tactical responses to pupils' difficulties as the teaching assistants were all focussed on compliance with their instructions from the Additional Literacy Support manuals. The agency of the teaching assistants reported in this study could well be criticised. However, this position needs to be analysed in an historical context because during the research, I observed and interviewed some examples of what Newman (2001), outlined as the proliferation of control measures (training, programme manuals, funding) designed to ensure that teaching assistants delivered what the government intended.

Moss (2007) suggests that the approach of compliance to a target-led agenda was a feature of how New Labour's modernisation was being enacted and experienced by those working in schools at the time of this research. So questions about agency and the nature of pedagogy are also questions of governance. The analysis of the responses reveal that the instrumental rationality displayed by the teaching assistants is not merely a reflection of competing theories about learning to read but also a reflection of accountability through compliance. Moss (2007) also describes how teachers

became more accountable through a planning regime which obliged them to demonstrate clearly in detailed plans how they were complying with the imperative to deliver the National Literacy Strategy termly, weekly and hourly. Moss describes how government:

> 'Put more store by the content of literacy policy, and the particular method chosen. From this perspective the success of policy depends upon delivery of and fidelity to a given policy content' Moss (2007:18).

Given the above context, the compliance of teaching assistants in this study is not surprising. New Labour imposed both content and method on practitioners in the Literacy Strategy without negotiation. Moss (2007) commented that the change in favour of the new strategy happened in a relatively short space of time. Moss (2007:16), refers this as '*fast policy*'.

New Labour's intention was that the pedagogy underpinning ALS as a prescribed phonics-led programme reduces the need for costly training and encourages a reliance on the content itself as the catalyst for improvement. The results in this study dispute the effectiveness of an overly prescribed scheme, as theoretically it lacks flexibility in addressing the needs of all learners. Reports such as OFSTED 2009 as mentioned in 2.7g also acknowledge that limited training and a limited selection of approaches to the teaching of reading was not an effective way to teach all pupils.

5.2b Strategic Compliance in Florida

In contrast the analysis of the interviews and observations of teachers in Florida revealed that they were fully aware of their responsibilities to achieve the Sunshine State Standards. However in addressing the standards they used the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme to meet the

needs of their learners. Their compliance as Shain and Gleeson (1999) describe is more 'Strategic Compliance'. The analysis of the observations and test scores in this study, indicate that accelerating the reading of pupils through a flexible approach which is concerned with meaning and understanding has improved the capacity of pupils to perform in state tests. The notion of 'Strategic Compliance' as expressed by Shain and Gleeson (1999) is in evidence in the pedagogy in Florida. Shain and Gleeson demonstrate how well-trained teachers attempt to address their responsibilities.

> 'Strategic compliers adopt a strategic view whereby they are able to offer `alternative' measures within the system, to ensure that quality education is provided to a range of students' (Shain and Gleeson, 1999: 456 & 458).

Menter views the actions of teachers like the examples cited in Florida as 'professional' because they did not simply deliver policy in the manner of a technician.

> 'Teachers are not the mere recipients of policy, nor are they to be understood as endlessly manipulable. As we have indicated they have strong cultures and considerable loyalty and dedication to the education service' (Menter, 1997:132).

The teachers in this study were able to teach using a variety of techniques which they felt would benefit their emergent readers. They practiced professional discretion in applying techniques which they considered appropriate. The teachers in Florida were well-trained and confident and were able to draw on a range of techniques to enable the pupils to understand the text.

According to De Bray (2006) The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) has put teachers in Florida under pressure in terms of Sunshine State Standards to ensure that all pupils meet their Annual

Yearly Progress. The way that Accelerated Literacy Learning programme had in-built flexibility akin to Whole language theory allowed for bespoke pedagogy to suit the needs of the learner. Geekie et al (1999) argue that the best way in which children learn to read depends on social practice in a meaningful interaction with the teacher. This is demonstrated in the strategic compliance of the teachers observed in Florida.

5.3 Technician or Professional?

The above theme emerged from findings chapter which is linked to sub-question 3 of the research:

How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?

The theme of technician or professional is concerned with how the professionalism of the individuals delivering the strategies was used and what effect this had on the effectiveness of the two programmes.

Technician in England

The claim was made in the Descriptive Findings Chapter 4.9 that a theme of technician emerged from the observations and interviews in England. When analysing the observations it was apparent that all the teaching assistants were directed in their delivery by the ALS manual. The manual handbooks were used openly in the lesson and a reluctance to deviate from the instructions was evident. Teaching prompts employed from ALS module 4 handbook (p118-120) were noted during the observations. This is not unsurprising as the ALS programme was specifically designed for delivery by teaching assistants to enable pupils to pass a twenty word reading and spelling list test at the end of an ALS module. By the nature of such a relatively narrow measure of success, it consequently only required limited technical expertise to teach it. As mentioned in the previous

section 5.2, the observations revealed that the ALS programme was quite successful in achieving its own limited targets as 80% of the ALS pupils were able to pass their module test and progress to the next module at the first attempt. However this only translated into limited gains in their annual NFER reading scores in the first two years of the study. Also in terms of achieving success in Year Six SATs, the comprehension element of the test produced low scores with the ALS group. The observations revealed that the approach of the teaching assistants as technicians did not require them to develop the comprehension skills of the pupils. In this study the role of technician did not promote effectiveness in reading comprehension. The reluctance of the teaching assistants to develop the pupils reading ability beyond the instructions of the ALS manual became apparent during the interviews. The interview findings revealed a determination by the teaching assistants to adhere closely to the ALS programme and not to deviate from it. Their role as technicians was readily accepted as outlined in the following response:

Interviewee 1: *No we did literally what was in the book….. I did it exactly as I was told to do on the course and by the teacher….just what was in the book really.*

Interviewee 2: *I wasn't sure if we were allowed to change anything….. I didn't want to get anything wrong…. I had to fill in an evaluation sheet at the end to show that I had done it right.*

The teaching assistants behaved as technicians because their remit was to improve the pupils at word level to pass the module test. However their role as technician did not develop the text level understanding for the pupils. This would have required more detailed and intense teaching to improve SATs scores in regards to comprehension.

So in addressing the question of whether the teaching assistants' role as technician impeded or promoted effectiveness, this study supports the view that it depends on the success criteria used to measure the concept of success. If success is determined by word recognition and replication for a

test, then a technician's role promotes success. If success is determined by understanding and application then the role of a technician can impede effectiveness.

Professional in Florida

The interviews in Florida show that teachers were acutely aware of policy. Teachers were able to exercise a degree of agency which allowed for an effective acceleration of pupils' reading.

In all six observations in Florida, teachers exercised a level of professional discretion. Each lesson, although using similar elements, was unique to the stage of development in reading of the pupil at that time. In 4.9 examples of teachers in Florida using their professional discretion are noted. The examples show how teachers were able to provide spontaneous bespoke sessions to suit the needs of the pupil. The sessions did all have the same elements of: rehearsal, emotional response, recap, recording, meaning, consolidation and progression as outlined in 5.1 but the elements were not a restrictive format for the teachers. The seven features were used by the teachers to enable pupils to understand the text and derive meaning from it and relate directly to Whole Language theory as outlined in 2.4. There were occasions in the lessons when the teachers did engage in some decoding activities but the primary concern was that the pupils understood the text. This relates directly with Whole Language theory which promotes the purpose of reading as acquiring meaning.

An analysis of the observations revealed that although the teachers in Florida were teaching reading, they were teaching a different view of reading from the teaching assistants in England. According to Meek (1980) the pursuit of meaning is a more complex activity than letter sound correspondence and requires the use of a more advanced set of teaching skills. The range of pedagogical techniques used by teachers of ALL was far greater than those used by the teaching

assistants delivering ALS because they were teaching meaning rather than simple recognition. Brashears (2002) comments that in order to develop the reading skills of the pupils, the teachers of ALL need to be well trained in order to respond to the individual needs of the learners.

The confidence to make decisions to improve pupils' reading is developed during the training of the teachers. The training of teachers is discussed in more detail in 6.4.

The professionalism of the teachers was revealed in the interview responses in Florida in regards to training, professional confidence and decision making for pupils. Their ability to respond to the needs of the pupils and establish meaning in text was exemplified in the following responses:

Interviewee C**:** *When I was teaching in Orange county we got a grant called 'Literacy First' and it provided us with some in depth training which has helped me to develop different strategies for the children in my group… so I can recognise similar problems and can use my training to deal with them when they come up…I am constantly learning……. I use a lot of outside resources not just what the school has given me. There is flexibility, so good teachers can use their professionalism.*

Interviewee B**:** *We make a lot of accommodation because all of our students are different, we have ESOL. They may be reading in English but thinking in Spanish so we have to be flexible and change things to develop them. This is what the programme is about. It is developing their reading not just going through the books because some children can't do that…… Each student is very different so there has to be accommodation at various levels. That's how the students acquire meaning.*

As the test score results in Chapter 4 indicate, the ALL programme had a significant effect on improving the reading scores of pupils in Florida. This confirms evidence from the observations

and interviews which support the notion that the professionalism of the teachers promoted the effectiveness of the ALL programme (sub-question 3).

5.4 Outcomes in test score data

The above theme emerged from Findings Chapter in order to address sub-question 2 of the research: **What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?**

An analysis and commentary on the test scores has been given in the previous chapter 4.10. In this section the analysis of the findings is focussed on what the data means and how the results reflect on theories of reading.

When evaluating the effectiveness of the reading strategies on test scores, the consideration of the tests themselves requires deliberation. At the end of each ALS module the pupils were tested on spelling a list of twenty words. Pupils were not required to contextualise these words in sentences or demonstrate understanding or meaning. This measure of success is not the same as required in NFER reading tests or in the Year six reading SAT. In both these standardised tests pupils are required to demonstrate developing levels of comprehension. There is a discrepancy in the measure of success in perceived by completing tests to pass ALS modules with the measure of success in NFER and SATs.

Nevertheless, the findings for ALS reveal that whilst the programme was in operation in Years 3 and 4, the pupils on the ALS programme did improve on their end of year reading tests. However, the NFER reading tests are progressive in nature and so at Year 3, recognition of words and literal comprehension will allow the pupils to score marks on the test. As the tests develop in Years 4 and 5, the pupils are required to display skills of simple inference and deduction which rely heavily on

pupils understanding meaning. When the ALS programme finished at Year 4, the pupils in this study did not receive any further additional teaching in terms of reading intervention strategies. The anticipated transition from decoding words to assembling meaning in text was not successful with the pupils' results on reading tests. This led to a fall in the test scores in Year 5 as indicated in 4.10 (Chart 2). This use of inference and deduction is also present in Year 6 SATs. One could argue that the Year 6 results for the ALS group, which show a tail off and a return to comparative levels of below average achievement at Year 2, demonstrate that the theory of using a predominantly phonics-based approach with limited use of other strategies as outlined in 2.1 was not effective in developing the long-term success in reading that the government had anticipated. The phonics-based approach also did not translate into improved test scores over a four-year period. By the time the ALS group had finished primary school in Year 6, their test scores had reverted back to their below average standardised scores before their ALS teaching. They were in effect ranked in the same comparative levels with their peers as they were in Year 2. The ALS programme had not produced a long lasting effect on their overall reading ability compared to their peers. In this study only 18% of the ALS pupils achieved Level 4 in their Year 6 SATs. The analysis suggests that this was because the pupils were unable to make the transition from recognition to meaning in time to display proficiency in their Year Six SATs. This theme was recognised by government in 2002-2003 when Further Literacy Support (FLS) was introduced in England to address the problem of pupils who were still behind their peers in Literacy despite being involved in the ALS programme.

As Jolliffe (2004:5) concludes a 'one size fits all' approach may not be effective for pupils struggling with reading. The evidence from observations and test results in this study suggests that Additional Literacy Support did not produce the change which New Labour had envisaged. 82% of

the pupils scoring below average in Year 2 in this study were still below average in Year 6 even after ALS intervention. Jolliffe deliberates on the difficulties with wholesale teaching reform to suit a political strategy:

> 'One of the key factors in instigating change in the teaching of literacy was the 'long tail of underachievement' and evidence that between one sixth and one eighth of adults experience problems with basic literacy, and this had persisted for 60 years…….the NLS has had little effect on this 'long tail of underachievement' (Jolliffe, 2004:5).

Florida

In Florida the effect of ALL is more clearly defined by the test score data as demonstrated in 4.10 (Chart 5). The Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 1997) was used to test pupils before selection on to the ALL programme. Due to limited funding, places on the ALL programme were restricted and so two groups were easily identified from the same ability levels. One group of pupils were given ALL and another group were not. An analysis of children of similar abilities revealed that pupils who took ALL were two whole comprehension levels above the class average and eight levels above the pupils of similar ability who did not take ALL. Not only had the ALL group overtaken the children of similar ability but were now ahead of the class average. A with the analysis of the test results in England, the nature of the tests to determine success requires consideration. The test scores in Florida relate to the pupils ability in comprehension as well as word recognition and spelling. Comparisons between the pupils receiving ALL, and those of similar ability, who did not, are based on comprehension levels. The results in 4.10 were taken a full year after the pupils had left the ALL programme and therefore is an indication of sustained progress in comprehension achieved by pupils engaged in ALL.

In short the effect of these strategies on test scores reveals that ALL has a greater effect on raising test score related to comprehension. Therefore the pupils receiving ALS and ALL were not assessed using the same test and so any comparison is unfair. However the criterion for success in both settings (SATS in UK, FCAT in Florida) is in the understanding of the text which is valued as a higher order skill in reading tests than letter sound correspondence. It is notable that the ALL group were from a comparatively similar ability group as the pupils selected for ALS. The ALL group succeeded on the understanding of text whereas the ALS pupils did not.

The District Education Authority in Florida also had the advantage of a more flexible approach to selecting appropriate programmes for the teaching of reading. A national imposed style of pedagogy as used in England was not present in Florida. The profile of the local school population was taken into account when Homan and King devised the ALL programme on the basis of local knowledge and research in to what would be effective instruction for a largely multicultural and multi-ethnic population. In the case of reading pedagogy in Florida, the child-centred Whole Language approach appeared effective in this study and demonstrated relevance to a diverse pupil population.

In conclusion the shortcomings of a phonics-based National Strategy as a vehicle to improve test scores for all pupils has been indicated in the results of this study whilst the benefits of a more flexible Whole Language child-centred approach have been found to be successful in Florida.

Chapter 6

6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter contains some conclusions and recommendations which emerge from the analysis of data chapter. The areas covered are:

1. What this research adds to the discussion on effective ways to teach reading.

2. How this research compares with other studies.

3. How policy for teaching reading has influenced notions of effective practice.

4. Issues of training.

5. Recommendations.

Conclusions in terms of the main research question and sub-questions:

Main research question:

What are the main differences between reading strategies in England and Florida?

The main differences in approach to teaching reading in this study can be viewed in the contrasting philosophies which underpinned the two different theoretical frameworks. In Florida the use of ALL used a variety of approaches utilising Whole Language theory. As outlined in 5.1, ALL predominantly employed the experience process but used reading strategies and skills as well. The emphasis was on meaning and engagement.

In contrast Additional Literacy Support employed in England was predominantly focussed on reading strategies and skills especially letter sound correspondence. The experience process was not a prominent feature of the teaching as the focus was on decoding and consolidation.

In terms of the first sub-question:

1. What was the style of pedagogy employed to teach reading to children identified as below average in reading test scores in England and Florida?

As outlined in 5.1, the pedagogy employed in England during this study was characterised by teacher-led instruction from a tightly scripted manual. The lessons followed a repetitive format and predominantly focussed on decoding with only slight focus on context. The aim of the pedagogy was for children to be able to read and spell words from a prescribed checklist as part of a remediation process for words which they were supposed to have understood by the end of Key Stage 1.

In contrast the pedagogy employed in Florida was of a bespoke and wide ranging nature to address the needs of the individual. The pedagogy was concerned with acceleration rather than remediation. The main emphasis was on the experience process and meaning. As outlined in 5.1, acceleration was promoted by building confidence in the pupils' ability to engage with the text through techniques of rehearsal and emotional response and recap. This enabled pupils to engage with the text as a whole giving opinions and comments even if they could not read every word. The bespoke nature of the pedagogy allowed teachers to make running records and ask pupils to demonstrate their new knowledge at the end of each session. This led to an on-going process where the teacher was able to select an appropriately levelled book for the pupil to prepare in advance of the next day's reading session.

2. What was the effect of these different strategies on educational outcomes, including test scores?

The effect on test scores in England, as outlined in 4.10, was that the ALS strategy had enabled some minor improvements to reading test scores to take place in the first two years of the research. However by the end of the study the pupils' scores had dropped back to a level commensurate to their initial ranking in year two compared to their peers. In effect they had not made the progress

towards attaining average scores in reading for their age and so had not achieved the aim of the strategy.

In Florida the test scores for the pupils involved in ALL showed good improvement. The initial below average scores of the pupils were improved to a level higher than the class average. This improvement was sustained a year after they finished the ALL sessions.

3. How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?

The approach in England in this study enabled pupils to decode more effectively and enabled them to revisit work from Key Stage 1. However this approach did not show improvement on their comprehension ability as reported in their later scores on reading tests. The approach taken with ALS also did not cater for the individual needs of the pupils, neither did it allow any flexibility to adapt and refine teaching to suit the needs of the learner as the classroom assistants were focussed on delivering their prescribed sessions. The test scores did not reveal any long term benefits and the observations showed that pupils did not appear enthused or motivated to develop their reading. This research concludes that the ALS had a neutral effect over all on pupil progress.

In Florida the use of a mixture of both the experience process and reading strategies and skills in a bespoke manner had a positive effect on progress. The main component of the success was the engagement and making sense of the text. The understanding of text through this approach enabled pupils to perform well on comprehension style tests used in Florida. This relates to the theoretical basis of Whole language theory as shown in 2.4 as an effective means of teaching reading through an experience process.

6.1 What does this research add to the discussion on effective ways to teach reading?

This research has evaluated effectiveness of two different approaches to the teaching of reading. The phonics-based approach embodied in Additional Literacy Support has been supported further in England with recent phonics initiatives following Rose's Simple View of Reading (2006) and the introduction of the phonics checklist in primary schools in June 2012. The implementation of teaching reading through phonics has also been further strengthened in Initial Teacher Education with all primary phase trainees receiving courses in phonics instruction as part of their degree. As outlined in 2.2, trainee teachers are also required to demonstrate the impact of their phonics teaching on their pupils over a six week period during their training.

However, the results of this research suggests that the relatively neutral impact of the phonics based ALS on test scores over a four-year period implies that successful reading is not just a series of skills taught as part of repeated instruction. This research also does not support the notion that children become effective readers solely through systematic and explicit instruction of phonics. The results in this study indicate that the policy pursued in England to raise scores in reading tests, revealed a belief about learning to read which promoted the idea that reading is a simple process of transmission of knowledge and skills from instructor to child. This assumption did not improve the results of the pupils in this study.

However the more Whole Language approach of ALL featured in this research did have a long lasting effect on the pupils who experienced the programme. Their reading scores did improve in the context of test scores which focussed on the more advanced reading skills of comprehension. The method of instruction in ALL was based on the knowledge that learning to read does not just

occur in simple bursts of instruction but rather as a social practice achieved in meaningful interactions with a well-trained teacher. The children on the ALL programme were learning to read contextually and making sense of the written word in order to comprehend meaning.

This is not to say that phonics is ineffective. This study demonstrates that a well-balanced approach which included some phonics teaching as demonstrated by ALL was indeed effective. What this study suggests is that phonics on its own is insufficient to make weak readers into advanced readers. The pupils who made sustained improvements in ALL in this study did so because they learned to read in an authentic context. The pupils who did not make sustained improvements on the ALS programme struggled to retain the phonics taught to them because they were not good at learning intangible words out of context.

Phonics was used in the ALS programme as the main strategy to teach reading. If this was the government's chosen strategy, then why did it not improve the chances of pupils attaining Level 4 in Year 6? The answer may lie in the nature of both the teaching and the test. The Year Six SAT contains reading for meaning in order to answer comprehension questions. However when the teaching assistants insisted on teaching to the formula of letter to sound correspondence out of context, they were unsuccessful due to a fundamental mistake. Their prescribed teaching methods changed reading from a process of making meaning and sense into a process of simply recognising letters for sounds. This distorted the effective use of phonics because they removed it from the context meaning and structure of what the pupils were trying to understand from the words on the page. In this respect reading for meaning was demoted in favour of an abstract concept of letter sound association. Consequently the pupils in the ALS group were unable to score highly on the comprehension style questions in their SAT because although they were technically proficient at sounding out the words, they lacked an understanding of context to answer the questions

accurately. This explanation addresses sub-question 3 regarding factors which promote or impede effectiveness.

6.2 How this research compares to other studies

6.2a England:

Bunn (2008), as described in 2.7, studied the 'effectiveness' of Additional Literacy Support in Years 3 and 4 and collated results over one year. Bunn compared the progress in reading of 256 Year 3 and Year 4 children in eleven classes across nine primary schools in England and so reported on a much larger sample than this study but in a shorter time scale. The focus of Bunn's report was to analyse how 'effective' Additional Literacy Support had been compared to a variety of other intervention strategies. His report makes two findings which are pertinent parallels with this study:

1. Additional Literacy Support was marginally more effective than other intervention strategies in the majority of classes.
2. Children receiving a variety of additional help made better than average progress albeit limited.

Bunn (2008) concludes that Additional Literacy Support alone was three times as efficient as other types of intervention. He also cites work by Hatcher et al (2006) on ELS to conclude that 'scripted small group interventions by teaching assistants are as effective as other interventions' (Bunn 2008:223).

The findings of this study disagree with Bunn's definition of 'effectiveness' on the grounds that Bunn relates effectiveness with cost efficiency. This research evaluates notions of effective practice but does not include cost and focused on finding whether the policy outcomes of 80%

level 4 in reading SATs would be achieved using ALS. The findings in this research would also question the validity of Bunn's claims of cost effectiveness. Bunn's 2008 report refers to a one year study, whereas this study is over four years. The results in this research demonstrated in the long term that results in reading for pupils receiving ALS reverted back to their original below-average scores in comparison to their peer group. The effectiveness assumption on the grounds of cost efficiency can therefore be challenged because after Bunn's one year of initial modest improvement at moderate financial expense, Bunn's study did not monitor the long-term effect on test scores. In defending the findings of this research and challenging the numerical improvements noted in Bunn's report, the figures quoted by Bunn show that in the twelve months of his study pupils taught ALS made a 13.01 month increase in their reading age. Other programmes in his study showed a greater increase of 15.84 months. Although Bunn does not specify what the 'other' programmes are, they still remain statistically to be more effective than Additional Literacy Support. So Bunn's assumptions of effectiveness are based on one year of improvements on a programme that is still statistically inferior to others in his study.

Bunn also qualifies his claim that Additional Literacy Support is 'effective' by referring to the fact that other intervention strategies are often one-to-one whereas Additional Literacy Support is delivered in groups of five or six. Bunn adds that teaching assistants are paid between a half and a third of a qualified teacher. The results which propel Additional Literacy Support in to a more favourable light than reported in this study lie in Bunn's analysis of outcomes which are termed as 'gain per staff hour of help' (Bunn, 2008:223). This amount of effectiveness is therefore again measured in terms of cost.

The findings of this study challenge Bunn's assumptions of cost effectiveness because the pupils in this study did not actually achieve the policy goal in this four year longitudinal study so one

could take the view that this cost was therefore not 'effective' at all. Although this research did not focus on cost as a measure of effectiveness, it still can challenge Bunn's assumptions of 'effectiveness' over a year as an unfair comparison. Outcomes for both programmes in this research were measured over longer periods of time than Bunn's study (4 years ALS and 2 years ALL) and therefore Bunn's claims over one year do not reflect what ALS was intended to achieve over two years. This calculation in turn would double Bunn's one year cost effectiveness claim.

6.2b Florida:

There has been one review of Accelerated Literacy Learning to date as outlined in 2.7e. The review was undertaken by The Florida Center for Reading Research and conducted by Wahl (2002). This research agrees with Wahl's conclusions as she found many positive effects of the programme and no negatives in terms a programme designed to ensure that pupils met policy outcomes.

Results from Wahl's report (2002), showed that assessments by fourteen primary teachers and twenty seven pupils illustrated that pupils who received Accelerated Literacy Learning were reading at book level 20, which is considered to be the high end of first grade reading capability. They also were able to comprehend at levels higher than the average for pupils in the class. Results compiled for this study agree with Wahl and suggest that Accelerated Literacy Learning can accelerate at risk pupils to average literacy performance and above.

Wahl's report goes on to conclude:

> 'Accelerated Literacy Learning has been evaluated in multiple Florida counties using similar research designs and measures and the authors of the program have reported similar results' (Wahl, 2002:4).

Davis and Wilson (1994) reported that Reading Recovery style programmes like ALL, implemented in the United States demonstrate that most Reading Recovery students do well on standardised tests and maintain their gains in later years. The intervention seemed to have had a lasting impact as the results were sustained after the intervention finished. This reflects the findings of this study.

This research acknowledges that Accelerated Literacy Learning was initially an expensive intervention programme due to its front loaded costs for training, but the sustained improvements of the pupils were measured over a two-year period and results remained consistently high. One could argue that initial costs spent on early intervention were recouped in the long term and so Accelerated Literacy Learning could be viewed as cost effective.

6.3 How policy for teaching reading has influenced notions of effective practice.

This study evaluates the approaches to the teaching of reading in the context of the commonality of policy in both settings aimed at improving reading test scores for pupils below average on standardised tests. The demands of policy have influenced pedagogy significantly in England as witnessed in the tightly scripted ALS programme.

Commentators such as Shannon (2000) argue that programmes such as ALS demonstrate a growing efficiency movement in the teaching of reading which copies the model of industry in terms of the logic of production. Shannon believes that this attitude pervades other modern capitalist countries and the logic of this attitude is that business requires all aspects of industry to be as predictable as possible in order to maximise profits. Therefore work is a rational process which discounts emotion and individuality. Although this notion would support the observations and interviews contained in this study of ALS in England, it is also present in USA. Ravitch (2001)

exemplifies this notion further in her criticism of the 'Education Reform Movement' in America by declaring that the education reformers believe:

> 'Teachers don't need creativity. Teachers need to use methods that have proved successful' cited in Shannon (2000:1).

One could criticise the Education Reform Movement for supporting the removal of interest, emotion and individualism from the process of teaching reading through phonics based instruction. As outlined in 2.6a Shannon argues that the use of highly scripted programmes is justified through the logic of efficiency linked to a business model.

As outlined in 2.4 Johnstone and Costello (2009) expand on this theme and claim that the business model processes started to appear accepted and unavoidable to practitioners in schools. This is because from the viewpoint of some practitioners, it appears appropriate to accept these prescribed methods as this may lead to higher test scores and avoid any punishment in the form of additional inspection. Also if test scores did not improve then the practitioners can claim that they were following an agreed process. The interviews with teaching assistants delivering ALS in this study support Johnstone and Costello's view as they adhered rigidly to the instructions in the ALS module handbook and accepted that the practice outlined in ALS was the most appropriate model to improve reading scores.

Goouch and Lambirth (2011) develop the perceptions of the business model manifested in the teaching of reading through the concept of 'reification'. This is the process where a form of action becomes accepted as if it were an 'immutable procedure' (Goouch and Lambirth, 2011:114). In the case of teaching reading, when a phonics checklist mentality is applied, the practitioners tend to overlook that teaching reading is a human process. When reading is defined on a business style model then the consequence is that practitioner's knowledge about the child and the process of

reading is not used effectively. The interviews of the teaching assistants again support this notion as they were reluctant to use any of their own subject knowledge for fear of doing something wrong. In contrast the teachers delivering ALL used their knowledge of the child and the pursuit of meaning as the main element of a professional approach.

Goouch and Lambirth (2011) argue that when test scores are reified as the focus of teaching then a teacher's work is reduced to an efficient delivery of ways to pass the test. This is true of the ALS programme which equates success in reading to the passing of tests at the end of each module and describes its teaching methods as 'efficient' (ALS: 3).

Shannon (2000) criticises the efficiency model as dishonouring teachers and their ability to respond in an informed way to the needs of individual pupils'. This criticism encapsulates the difference of the two approaches evaluated in this study. The strength of ALL in Florida was in the ability of the teachers to respond in an informed way to pupils needs. The ALS model relied on the rigid application of a programme.

6.4 Effectiveness of training

From the observations and interviews conducted in this study, a fundamental difference emerged in the training of the practitioners delivering the programmes in each setting. I was aware that I was observing two different types of professional. The most striking comparison was that the delivery of the programme in Florida was being conducted by highly-trained teachers and the programme in England by largely newly-recruited classroom assistants. Allied to this difference in status is the notion of technician or professional, which was reported in 4.9 of the Findings Chapter. This technician or professional notion links to the issue of training because as shown in

the Findings Chapter the practitioner's ability to act appropriately in order to meet the needs of the learner and secure successful policy outcomes was attributed to their level of training.

6.4a Training in England

The pedagogical approach of Additional Literacy Support required training for classroom assistants to deliver the programme. The module handbook states on the subject of training classroom assistants that:

> 'The programme offers training on a set of structured teaching materials to help them make a significant impact on standards' (Barber in ALS 1999:4)

The observations of Additional Literacy Support revealed that the classroom assistants had a limited ability to respond to the individual needs of the learner and an over reliance on the instructions in the module handbook. The results in this study link directly to the views expressed by Shannon (2000), as indicated in 2.6a, where the theory that simple phonics instruction would follow the business model and achieve results in the most efficient manner possible.

The interview responses indicated that ability of the classroom assistants to meet pupils' needs was limited by the brevity of the training. Their rigid compliance to the programme was also supported in their training and module handbook. In order to discuss the validity of this study's findings in terms of the impact of training on practice and outcomes, further reference to other studies of Additional Literacy Support would provide comparison and discussion.

As shown in 2.7g, a report by OFSTED (2009) commented specifically on the training of classroom assistants and how their training affected practice. I acknowledged in Chapter Three the limitations of this study in terms of number of participants involved in the observations to deliver ALS which may have given a restricted view of any more successful applications of Additional

Literacy Support. OFSTED's 2009 report was with a larger sample of twelve Primary schools. It revealed more of a variation in the ways in which practice was affected by training.

OFSTED reported:

> 'Small-group intervention was effective when teaching assistants were thoroughly trained, worked closely with class teachers, had good subject knowledge and knew the programmes well. Where provision was good, teaching assistants had sufficient subject knowledge to adapt the materials and their approach to meet the pupils' needs' (OFSTED, 2009:25).

This section of the OFSTED report reveals that practice was only effective when training was thorough. Where the OFSTED (2009) report and this study agree is in the factors observed which impeded effectiveness (Sub-question 3) of the programmes. These impeding factors are the combination of limited training and an over reliance on the Additional Literacy Support programme as the sole means of achieving effective reading. The limited training identified by OFSTED which affected outcomes lies in the;

> 'insufficient timely and accurate identification of intervention for pupils, insufficiently specific planning to meet pupils' particular needs and teaching assistants' lack of subject knowledge and confidence to adapt sessions according to pupils' understanding' (OFSTED 2009:29).

The OFSTED report goes on to say:

> 'Insufficiently careful planning to meet pupils' needs was the main reason why, in some of the primary schools, the impact of interventions on the curriculum was only satisfactory. This often coincided with the withdrawal of small groups of pupils for work led by

> teaching assistants: the assistants were not fully trained and had limited subject knowledge' (OFSTED 2009:29).

In Chapter 4.9, the training which classroom assistants described in interviews, directed them to a reliance on the module handbook and too little flexibility in delivery. The theoretical basis for their pedagogy was heavily reliant on teaching reading strategies through grapho-phonic work and ignoring the experience process. As stated in 2.6 the balance of strategies was not apparent in the observations in this study. OFSTED's (2009) report came to similar conclusions as outlined in the following extract:

> 'Senior staff evaluated teaching assistants' work and found they were delivering the programmes only as dictated in the materials and had few independent strategies for tailoring learning to individual pupils' (OFSTED 2009:25).

The findings of this study in Chapter Four revealed that only 18% of the pupils receiving Additional Literacy Support achieved the policy goals. The implication is that the training and programme were ineffective in reaching the target of 80% level 4 in 2002. The findings in Chapter 4.9 support the OFSTED (2009) conclusion in terms of some examples of inadequate training which impeded effectiveness of teaching. This contributed to addressing sub-question 3:
How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?
The data in this study disputes the theory outlined in 2.1 that a purely reading skills approach using letter sound correspondence promotes effective reading for all pupils.

6.4b Training in Florida

This study found that the training for the two reading programmes differed significantly in length and intensity. The training impacted on the ability of the practitioners to act as technicians or professionals. In the Findings Chapter 4.9 and 4.10, responses in interviews revealed that teachers in Florida were secure in their subject knowledge and used their intensive training to secure successful outcomes. This study suggests that the child-centred Whole Language pedagogy used by Accelerated Literacy Learning required thorough training in order to achieve professionalism and flexibility. The implication of these successful test score outcomes in Findings Chapter 4.12 is simply that thorough training promotes effectiveness of programmes in the long term and raises standards.

King and Homan (2000) the creators of Accelerated Literacy Learning agree that in order to have excellent teachers of reading, high quality professional development of teachers as well as in-class coaching is the most effective way to successful outcomes in test scores. Wahl (2002) claims that the Department for Education in Florida also takes the view that a well-trained teacher will benefit the whole class not just the children involved in the Accelerated Literacy Learning programme.

The cost implication of the training is not explicitly part of the main research question. However the success of the programme is intrinsically linked to the ability of teachers to use their training to improve test scores. The teachers participate in an intensive year-long training programme with funding made available for this expensive process. Teachers' contracts in Florida include time beyond the normal school teaching time, for additional training on a long-term basis and a requirement to engage in CPD each year. Some of this additional time and enhanced qualifications can translate in to increased pay for teachers. This resulted in a strong uptake for training places at the time of this study. The level of training to support the programme appears intensive and costly.

However, the results reported in this study suggest Accelerated Literacy Learning produced lasting improvements in test scores which enabled pupils to achieve above average results a year after leaving the programme. So the long-term effects of the programme can justify the initial investment as a means of achieving the Sunshine State Standards. Slavin *et al* (2009) support this conclusion that one-to-one teaching from qualified teachers and reading specialists is the most effective intervention for struggling readers. It may be an expensive solution, but cost may be justified if it can make a substantial difference to pupils at an important point in their reading development and so could reduce costs for later special educational needs provision.

The evaluation of ALL in this study agrees with the findings of Wahl (2002) which found many positive effects of the programme and no negatives. The effectiveness of training in terms of achieving policy goals is also supported by Wahl (2002) where she cites research by King and Homan (2002) which reports that a total of 127 teachers in six districts who had participated in Accelerated Literacy Learning were sent surveys with 72% being completed and returned. Teachers noted that the professional development for Accelerated Literacy Learning was valuable in helping them to be a more effective literacy teacher. The training in Florida was substantial and was undertaken on a weekly basis over a yearlong course as Wahl 2002:1 describes:

> ‘Teachers must participate in an intensive year-long training.
>
> The training consists of two semesters with a total of six graduate credits. During the training, teachers learn about detailed observation, peers demonstrate teaching, teachers analyze the teaching of others while observing videos of actual lessons, and they are taught the concept of scaffolded learning. Following the first year training, teachers return once a month for a 2-hour training session called Veteran’s Training (Wahl, 2002:1).

On the ALL training courses in Florida, teachers who had finished the training returned so that they could make suggestions for further improvements to the programme and to share their knowledge and experience with other teachers starting the training. This contributed to addressing sub-question 3:

How do these two different approaches to reading appear to impede or promote effectiveness?

The data in this study supports the theory outlined in 2.4 that a more balanced approach to the teaching of reading which encompasses an experience process promotes effective reading for all pupils.

6.5 The Programmes now

Both programmes are no longer in widespread use in England or in Florida. The Schools employing Additional Literacy Support in England in this study stopped using the programme with the demise of the National Literacy Strategy and its replacement with the Primary National Strategy. The classroom assistants employed to implement the programme have been redeployed to support children on the SEN register in whole-class based literacy activities under the title of 'Access to Learning' and 'Inclusion'. The classroom assistants also help to deliver parts of IEPs with some supervision of computer-based programmes to develop spelling. The schools in the study have received additional funding to employ teachers as tutors for individual instruction for pupils on Action Plus of the special needs register.

In Florida the use of Accelerated Literacy Learning was dependent on the training of teachers. During the time of this study, teachers were 'compensated' for their participation in training when extra pay was allocated to those attending courses. The compensation element has been withdrawn due to the difficult economic circumstances in the United States. Unfortunately only a small

number of teachers committed themselves to unfunded training. The training programme was scrapped in 2009. Teachers in the county are now working with a paper-based instruction model which requires no training but is initially less expensive to implement. No results are available at the time of writing to measure the effects of this paper based approach.

6.6 Recommendations based on the research.

In evaluating the two approaches to reading through ALS and ALL, I have compiled nine recommendations drawn from the research which elaborate the more effective ways to teach reading based on this study:

1. One-to-one teaching

The sustained improvement in results for ALL show that one-to-one teaching by well-trained teachers is highly effective. Children who have been unable to achieve average levels of reading should receive one-to-one tutoring using well-researched models.

2. Child-centred

The findings of this study from ALL suggest that teachers can considerably enhance the learning of low achievers by adopting child-centred co-operative approaches. However, child-centred Whole Language style pedagogy requires substantial training to be effective but enhances the responsibility and professionalism of teachers.

3. Over-reliance on content

The evaluation of ALS revealed that a knowledge-led pedagogy underpinning a national programme can be overly reliant on its content and be ineffective in raising scores on tests. It can also lead to the de-professionalising of its staff.

4. Brief tutoring sessions by teaching assistants.

The findings of this study does not support the notion that relatively brief tutoring by classroom assistants as manifested in ALS is enough to ensure the long-term success of pupils in reading.

5. Training

Programmes that provide extensive professional development for teachers in well-researched reading programmes such as ALL are more effective than programmes which provide brief training in a content-led curriculum such as ALS.

6. Collaborative Learning

The ALS findings suggest that pupils do not learn to enhance their reading skills through a teacher–led transmission of knowledge and skills exercise. Better results were achieved using a collaborative learning process such as ALL where the teacher understands the ability experience and knowledge of the pupil. The teaching is then tailored for the pupil from this understanding.

7. Guided participation

The ALL findings suggest that pupils become better readers through guided participation such as listening to story books, reading along and joining in with texts with refrains and questions. During ALL programme the pupils began to independently learn the significance of print through these methods.

8. Contingent Instruction

The contrast between the teaching styles in ALS and ALL suggest that effective teaching is 'contingent instruction' (Goouch and Lambirth, 2011:117). In this process teachers were more effective when they were able to construct bespoke teaching based on their observations and knowledge of the pupil. In ALL emergent readers were able to draw on particular strategies taught but were given time to practice on their own as the teacher endeavoured to hand over control of reading to the pupil.

9. Meaning

The findings relating to ALL demonstrated that the interactions between pupils and teachers need to be of a significant quality with regards to meaning. In this context learning is social and collaborative. It does not just depend on the teacher imparting information but rather working collaboratively with the pupil to show that meanings about the world and what needs to be learned are jointly constructed. This is because most new knowledge and skills must to be placed in a meaningful context in which children learn best (Geekie *et al* 1999).

The results of this study indicate that policy makers in England and Florida should be aware of the inadequacies of only pursuing a content-led phonics approach which by design will be limited by its own content as well as the practitioners delivering it. The benefits of a child-centred intense tuition approach whilst initially appearing costly was shown in this research to have long term benefits for the pupils involved this study.

In reviewing the findings of this research in 5.1 (pg. 179, items 1-7) against the various approaches to teaching reading as indicated in 2.7, the recommendations for reading based on this study are not meant to promote one theory over another in terms of teaching reading or to polarise opinion in 'The Reading Wars' debate. As a former primary school teacher, I support a pragmatic approach to teaching individual pupils with their own individual difficulties with reading. Below, I have divided up the common approaches to reading, as mentioned in 2.7, which a primary school teacher could employ. As outlined in 2.6a the approaches fall into two categories. Firstly, 'The Experience Process' and secondly, 'Reading Strategies and Skills'. The successful techniques outlined in the findings in 5.1(pg. 179, items 1-7) fall broadly into the first category of the experience process.

- **The experience process** **Reading Strategies and skills**
- Predict Semantic (context pictures)
- Connect Syntax (understanding how language works)
- Question Grapho – phonic (letter-sound)
- Engage

Whole Language theory relates more directly with the experience process and phonics with reading strategies and skills. As shown in 1.1 and 1.5, my experience of an over-reliance on phonics teaching being used unsuccessfully with my daughter due to her hearing loss, would

indicate that purely teaching reading strategies and skills would not have been a productive way of improving her reading. However, the reading strategies and skills approach maybe an entirely appropriate strategy to employ with other emergent readers. This research supports the notion that a more balanced approach to the teaching of reading allows teachers flexibility to address the needs of individual learners. If government policy is heavily in favour of one approach to reading over another as indicated in 2.2, then this will limit the ability of the teacher to respond to those needs.

This research indicates that a more balanced approach to the teaching of reading which utilises a variety of strategies appears to be more effective than an over reliance on one strategy.

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Appendices

1. Letter to parents

2. Letter of introduction

3. Results England

3a: Raw NFER and SATs results in England
Year 3, 4 & 5 Class 1

3b: NFER Year 3, 4 & 5 Class 2

3c: NFER and SAT Year 6 Class 1

3d: NFER and SAT Year 6 Class 2

4. Results Florida

4a: ALL 40 sessions group Florida

4b: Class average results Florida

4c: Need ALL results Florida

5. Interview sample England

6. Interview sample Florida

7. Observation record England

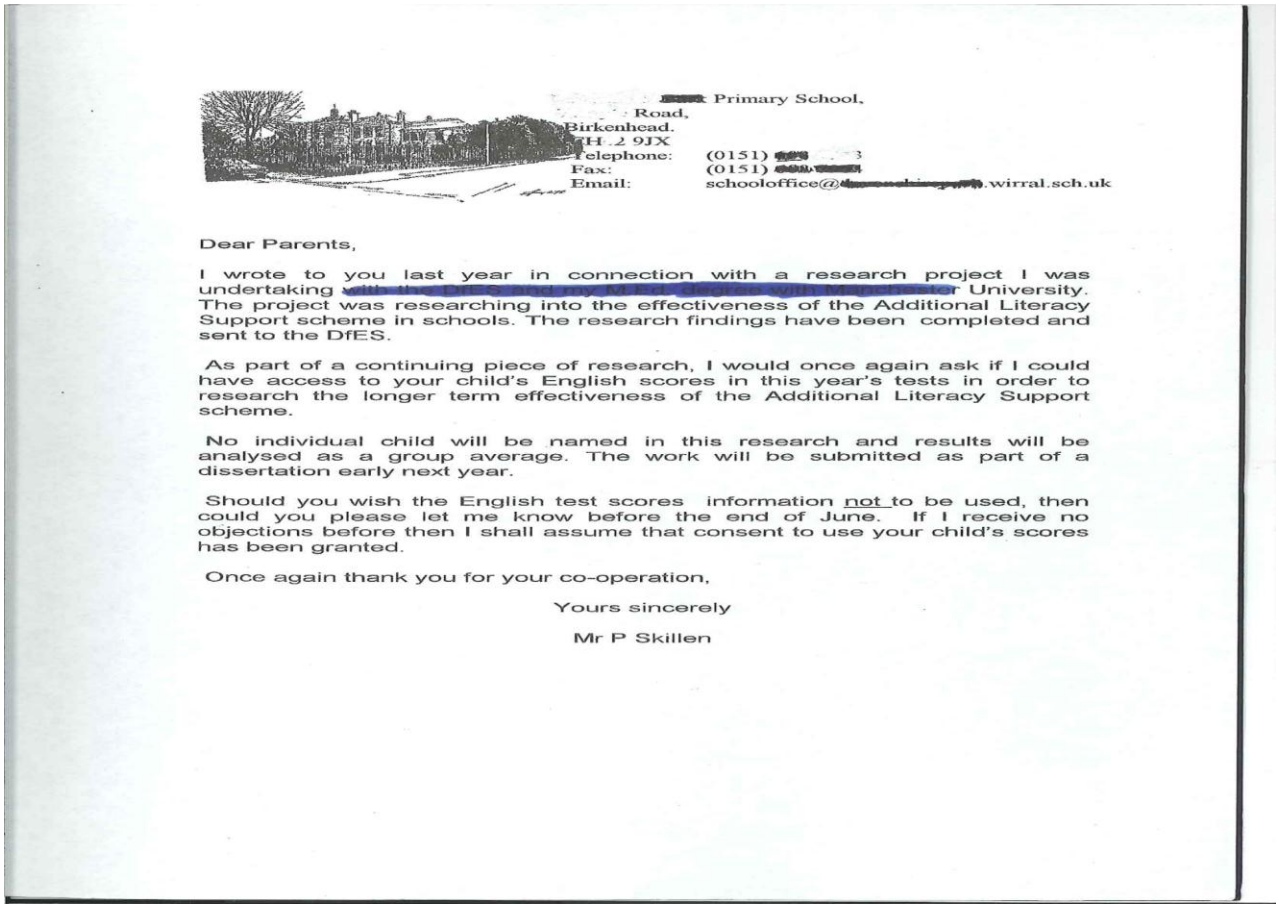
8. Observation record Florida

9. Extract from Vidovich Policy Analysis model (VIDO 1267,2001).

10. Sunshine State Policy Standards for pupils aged seven

11. NLS Policy Introduction

Appendix 1: Letter to parents



[redacted] Primary School,
[redacted] Road,
Birkenhead.
[redacted]H .2 9JX
Telephone: (0151) [redacted]
Fax: (0151) [redacted]
Email: schooloffice@[redacted].wirral.sch.uk

Dear Parents,

I wrote to you last year in connection with a research project I was undertaking with the DfES and my M.Ed. Degree with Manchester University. The project was researching into the effectiveness of the Additional Literacy Support scheme in schools. The research findings have been completed and sent to the DfES.

As part of a continuing piece of research, I would once again ask if I could have access to your child's English scores in this year's tests in order to research the longer term effectiveness of the Additional Literacy Support scheme.

No individual child will be named in this research and results will be analysed as a group average. The work will be submitted as part of a dissertation early next year.

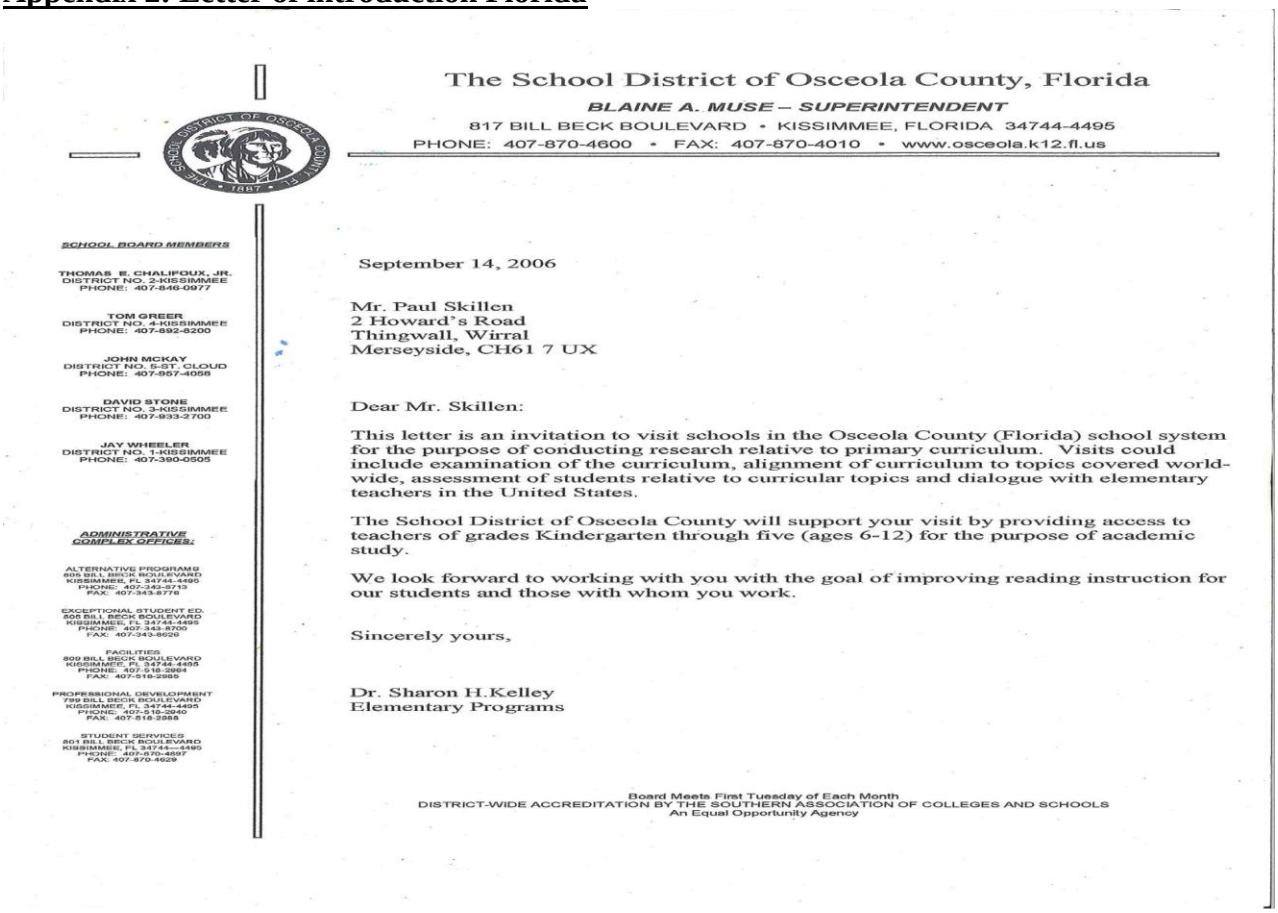
Should you wish the English test scores information not to be used, then could you please let me know before the end of June. If I receive no objections before then I shall assume that consent to use your child's scores has been granted.

Once again thank you for your co-operation,

Yours sincerely

Mr P Skillen

Appendix 2: Letter of introduction Florida



The School District of Osceola County, Florida

BLAINE A. MUSE – SUPERINTENDENT

817 BILL BECK BOULEVARD • KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA 34744-4495

PHONE: 407-870-4600 • FAX: 407-870-4010 • www.osceola.k12.fl.us

September 14, 2006

Mr. Paul Skillen
2 Howard's Road
Thingwall, Wirral
Merseyside, CH61 7 UX

Dear Mr. Skillen:

This letter is an invitation to visit schools in the Osceola County (Florida) school system for the purpose of conducting research relative to primary curriculum. Visits could include examination of the curriculum, alignment of curriculum to topics covered world-wide, assessment of students relative to curricular topics and dialogue with elementary teachers in the United States.

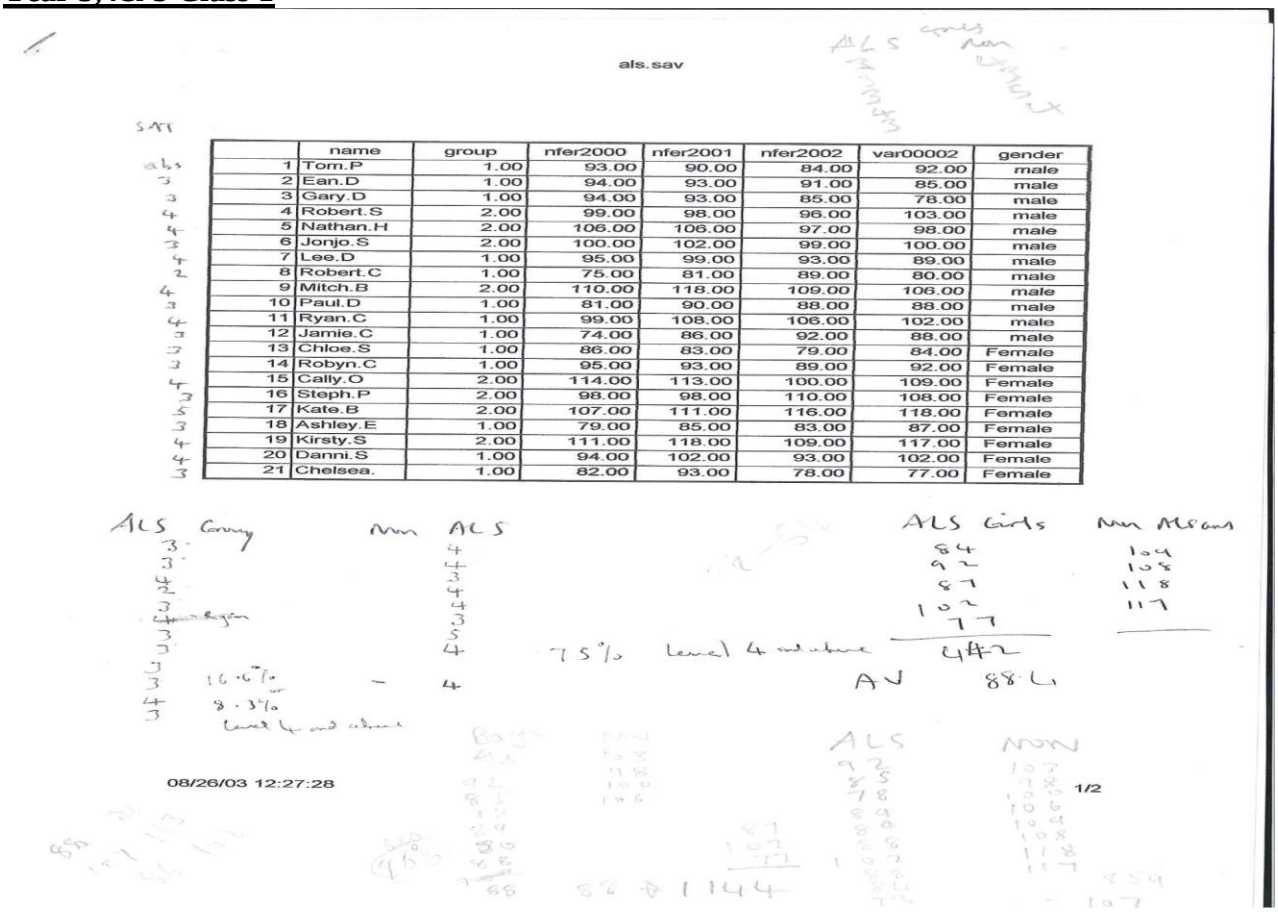
The School District of Osceola County will support your visit by providing access to teachers of grades Kindergarten through five (ages 6-12) for the purpose of academic study.

We look forward to working with you with the goal of improving reading instruction for our students and those with whom you work.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Sharon H.Kelley
Elementary Programs

Appendix 3a: Raw NFER and SATs results in England
Year 3,4& 5 Class 1



als.sav

	name	group	nfer2000	nfer2001	nfer2002	var00002	gender
1	Tom.P	1.00	93.00	90.00	84.00	92.00	male
2	Ean.D	1.00	94.00	93.00	91.00	85.00	male
3	Gary.D	1.00	94.00	93.00	85.00	78.00	male
4	Robert.S	2.00	99.00	98.00	96.00	103.00	male
5	Nathan.H	2.00	106.00	106.00	97.00	98.00	male
6	Jonjo.S	2.00	100.00	102.00	99.00	100.00	male
7	Lee.D	1.00	95.00	99.00	93.00	89.00	male
8	Robert.C	1.00	75.00	81.00	89.00	80.00	male
9	Mitch.B	2.00	110.00	118.00	109.00	106.00	male
10	Paul.D	1.00	81.00	90.00	88.00	88.00	male
11	Ryan.C	1.00	99.00	108.00	106.00	102.00	male
12	Jamie.C	1.00	74.00	86.00	92.00	88.00	male
13	Chloe.S	1.00	86.00	83.00	79.00	84.00	Female
14	Robyn.C	1.00	95.00	93.00	89.00	92.00	Female
15	Cally.O	2.00	114.00	113.00	100.00	109.00	Female
16	Steph.P	2.00	98.00	98.00	110.00	108.00	Female
17	Kate.B	2.00	107.00	111.00	116.00	118.00	Female
18	Ashley.E	1.00	79.00	85.00	83.00	87.00	Female
19	Kirsty.S	2.00	111.00	118.00	109.00	117.00	Female
20	Danni.S	1.00	94.00	102.00	93.00	102.00	Female
21	Chelsea.	1.00	82.00	93.00	78.00	77.00	Female

08/26/03 12:27:28

1/2

Appendix 3b: NFER Year 3,4&5 Class 2

Name	group	NFER 2000	NFER 2001	NFER 2002	gender
*****	1	82	93	78	male
*****	1	94	102	93	male
*****	1	79	85	83	male
*****	2	111	118	109	female
*****	2	107	111	116	female
*****	2	98	98	110	female
*****	2	114	113	100	male
*****	1	74	85	92	male
*****	1	84	84	79	male
*****	1	95	93	89	male
*****	1	86	83	79	male
*****	2	99	108	105	male
*****	1	82	90	87	female
*****	2	110	118	109	female
*****	1	93	90	84	female
*****	1	94	93	85	male
*****	2	106	105	97	female
*****	1	95	100	92	male
*****	1	94	93	91	female
*****	1	99	98	96	female
*****	2	100	102	99	female
*****	1	82	93	78	male
*****	1	94	102	93	male
*****	1	79	85	83	male
*****	2	111	118	109	female
*****	2	107	111	116	female
*****	2	98	98	110	female

Appendix 3c: NFER and SAT Year 6 Class 1

6G

OPTIONAL SATS AND NFER ANNUAL RESULTS COLLECTION - 2003

Surname	Forename	NFER MATHS	MATHS SAT	MENTAL SAT	NFER ENG	NFER READ	WRITING SAT	READING SAT	SPELL SAT
ADAMSON	RACHEL	115	A		123	106	4	5	
BLAKEBOROUGH	CHRISTIE	95	4		98	87	4	3	
CADWALLADER	ROBYN	81	3		92	85	3	4	
CALVELEY	LAURA	138	5		126	119	4	5	
CROSS	ASHLEY	109	4		91	92	3	4	
DAVIES	EAN	79	3		85	90	3	4	
DIABLE	LEE	82	3		89	85	4	3	
GOOD	CRAIG	88	3		78	85	N	3	
DOWNEY	CURTIS	102	4		96	85	3	5	
DOYLE	THOMAS	112	4		95	93	4	4	
EATOCK	ASHLEIGH	80	N		87	75	3	3	
FERNS	LUCY	122	5		117	111	4	6	
FULTON	JOHN	109	4		103	112	4	6	
HUGHES	JENNIFER	118	4		113	119	5	5	
HULSE	NATHAN	113	4		93	95	3	4	
HUNT	SOPHIE	135	5		128	106	5	5	
JARVIS	RACHEL	104	4		112	119	4	5	
JONES	AMY	100	4		103	99	4	5	
KIRKHAM	JAMES	98	3		100	102	4	4	
LINDSAY	REBECCA	94	4		94	73	3	4	
OSRAM	CALLY	101	4		109	104	4	4	
POVALL	THOMAS	95	3		92	83	A	4	
POWELL	CHELSEA	88	3		77	75	N	3	
REID	WILLIAM	99	4		101	104	3	4	
ROBINSON	JOANNE	85	3		83	73	3	3	
SKILLEN	GRAEME	100	A		106	106	4	5	
STOCKER	ROBERT	109	4		103	103	3	5	
VAUGHAN-HAMMO	JOSHUA	105	5		101	94	4	5	
WILLIAMS	GEORGINA	108	5		109	116	4	5	

Appendix 4a: ALL 40 sessions group Florida

Student	ALL sessions	Comprehension Book Level
*********1	+ 40	18
*********2	+36	16
*********3	+ 40	19
*********4	+37	15
*********5	+ 40	20
*********6	+ 40	17
*********7	+ 40	17
*********8	+29	11
*********9	+36	17
*********10	+ 40	19
*********11	+ 40	17
*********12	+ 40	17
*********13	+ 40	17
*********14	+34	15
*********15	+ 40	17
*********16	+37	16
*********17	+ 40	19
*********18	+37	17
*********19	+ 40	18
*********20	+38	16
*********21	+ 40	15
*********22	+ 40	18
*********23	+ 40	17
*********24	+38	16
*********25	+ 40	17
*********26	+ 40	19
*********27	+ 40	18

Appendix 4b Class Average results Florida

Student	Comprehension Book Level
*********1	16
*********2	14
*********3	16
*********4	12
*********5	20
*********6	16
*********7	15
*********8	15
*********9	15
*********10	15
*********11	14
*********12	13
*********13	14
*********14	14
*********15	13
*********16	14
*********17	16
*********18	15
*********19	14
*********20	19
*********21	11
*********22	18
*********23	13
*********24	16
*********25	17

Appendix 4c Need ALL Results Florida

Student	Comprehension Book Level
*********1	10
*********2	18
*********3	10
*********4	7
*********5	12
*********6	9
*********7	10
*********8	8
*********9	8
*********10	10
*********11	10
*********12	9
*********13	10
*********14	6
*********15	8
*********16	10
*********17	10
*********18	9
*********19	9
*********20	10
*********21	8
*********22	11
*********23	7
*********24	11
*********25	10
*********26	9
*********27	11
*********28	9

Appendix 5: ALS interviews Sample England

Question: Where did the policy for Additional Literacy Support originate and what is its purpose?

Interviewee 2: No idea.

Question: What are the key features of your lesson and how does the policy affect your delivery?

Interviewee 2: I was just given guidelines to follow in the manual and I stuck to them…. it was phonics mainly…sounding out words, getting the children to recognise how the sounds were represented by the letters....as well as sentence level work relating to the topics the children were covering in class.

Question: Do you adapt the framework, policy in any particular way?

Interviewee 2: No we did literally what was in the book….. I did it exactly as I was told to do on the course and by the teacher….just what was in the book really.

Question: Why did you not adapt the lessons at all?

Interviewee 2: I wasn't sure if we were allowed to change anything….. I didn't want to get anything wrong…. I had to fill in an evaluation sheet at the end to show that I had done it right

Question: Does the school policy allow for flexibility adaptation or change? How is this managed?

Interviewee 2**:** No… nothing… we weren't supposed to do anything ourselves…… just follow what was in the module books.

Question: **Why did you not adapt the lessons at all?**

Interviewee 2: I wasn't sure if we were allowed to change anything….. I didn't want to get anything wrong…. I had to fill in an evaluation sheet at the end to show that I had done it right.

Question: Did you use any of your own subject knowledge and experience to meet the needs of individuals?

Interviewee 2: I didn't want to do anything different with it, I didn't really feel qualified to do anything different and if I stuck to what was in the manual then I couldn't be criticised.

Question: Did you feel confident or empowered to use any of your own subject knowledge and experience used to modify the programme?

Interviewee 2: I have worked supporting children before but most of the stuff in the ALS manual was useful and I had used things like it before. I'm not an expert, so the structure in the manual was useful because sometimes I wondered whether I was doing the right thing. I suppose I was not that confident in what I was doing. At least ALS gives me a set of lessons that I can deliver and know that I am doing the right things…. so I didn't feel the need to use any of my own knowledge

Question: What did you do with the results of your Additional Literacy Support work?

Interviewee 2: I didn't do anything with the results. I just tested the children at the end of the modules and they went back to class once they had got through the modules.

Appendix 6: ALL interviews Sample Florida

Question: Where did the policy for Accelerated Literacy Learning originate and what is its purpose?

Interviewee B: It is like Reading Recovery, but we work with three students at a time rather than just the individual….. We learned all about the techniques and the process and how well it works during our training. The district decided on using ALL after research in Florida showed it to be the best approach for our students. You could say that it's a State product for our State students.

Question: What are the key features of your lesson and how does the policy affect your delivery?

Interviewee B: We begin with what the child can do, build on what the child is trying to do and work out what the child needs to learn in order to meet the state standards…. Some of the children have weak vocabulary because they don't speak much English…. So we have to target that …… sometimes the phonics is fine because they can break down words in Spanish and sound them out…… and use similar skills to say words in English.

Question: Do you interpret the policy in any particular way?

Question: Does the school policy allow for flexibility adaptation or change? How is this managed?

Interviewee B: Yes, we can split up our students to fit in with their interests and their levels and allow them to choose the books they can read from our programme…… We make a lot of

accommodation because all of our students are different, we have ESOL. They may be reading in English but thinking in Spanish so we have to be flexible and change things to develop them. This is what the programme is about. It is developing their reading not just going through the books because some children can't do that…… Each student is very different so there has to be accommodation at various levels.

Question: Was any of your own subject knowledge and experience used to modify the programme?

Interviewee B: Yes we can change and make the programme more flexible because third grade is such a high stakes test year and if they don't pass the FCAT then they can be kept behind. We took a class of at risk second graders and put them in a class of eight with a classroom assistant and put in the acceleration strategy to make sure they had a good chance of getting their grades on the FCAT. They are also entitled to a before school and after school input.

Question: What did you do with the results of your Accelerated Literacy Learning work?

Interviewee B: Our scores are taken in by the district and if our students don't get the state standards then the school is given further fidelity checks and can be put in to corrective action. It doesn't matter how difficult our students find it to achieve the standards the state standards have to be met and if the students don't achieve them then we are made responsible.

Appendix 7: Observation Sample England

Obs no 3 [redacted] Primary 05/02/03

Observation Form

Activity observed: ALS Session - 20 mins 10.30 – 10.50

Age of learner:s 7-8 years old group of 6

Details of activity: 6 children removed from NLS group. Taught in resource room.

	Input of practitioner	Response of the learner
Introduction TA gave ~~out~~ worksheets	TA read introduction to lesson from ALS Manual looking at ou sound as in mouth and could	Children read and found words with 'ou', 'oo' sound in them.
Development TA gave out a worksheet to each pupil	Some words with 'oo' 'ou' had been cut out and given to the pupils in small pile. TA supervised the completion of light of Gunsler spelling	Children were asked to match the different ou and oo sounds with the cut out words to the ones on the worksheet and then make separate lists.
Conclusion TA recapped on the different spellings of the same sound.	TA asked children to read the words and explain why they had been put into particular columns based on the spelling. Some praise given.	children put the different words in to ~~pairs~~ columns based words and sound like words as they went through their list.

Additional Notes

Very limited time noted. (By the time children were settled to task only 12 mins of instruction time took place) Children distracted. Did not want to do the writing. Kept confusing the 'ooh' 'ouh' noise instead of the uh sound. Possibly deliberate as the TA made the distinction clear.

Appendix 8: Observation Sample Florida

[redacted] Obs no 5 [redacted] Elementary 15/05/07

Observation Form

Activity observed: ALL session 9.30 → 10.30

Age of learner: 5 3 pupils - 1 aged 6 2 aged 7

Details of activity: Daily ALL session. 3 children (pullout)
1 reading with teacher. 1 reading to prepare for session for teacher
1 selecting a new book to consolidate work covered in session just finished.

	Input of practitioner	Response of the learner
Introduction Pupil had book from previous day and had written record with him. Spent 5 mins before session re reading	Read book from previous day recognising words which caused difficulty supporting the pupil and sharing the reading. Praise given.	Pupil read confidently following the 5 mins 'rehearsal time' Smiled and responded to Praise given.
Development Teacher logged progress in a book kept at the side of the desk.	A new book was introduced Teacher asked questions asking for predictions about content and purpose based on picture cover. Read title in an excited voice. f.	Pupil responded to questions and attempted the new text Some of the vocabulary about a picnic was difficult and pronunciation was uncertain
Conclusion Recognised on progress made. Recorded words in 'words' book	Teacher noticed words which pupil had difficulty with and selected a new books - Recognised learning. Instructed pupil about home work (reading Praised progress	Pupil successfully read three new words - (1) with ph to start - phone, (2) Sophie middle, and (3) graph end.

(Spanish speaking pupil)

Cover new: reading blends

Additional Notes
Some of the questions on the book cover were not answered by the pupil - did not know the English words for saucer - Teacher suggested the Spanish word platillo.
Teacher introduced plastic letters to make up some consonant blends ph - and sounded out 'phone' to pupil. Pupil copied making predominantly 'f' sound.
Teacher produced picture cards with whole words written underneath and pupil repeated sight vocabulary which seemed to have been built up over a period of time and reinforced each day

Appendix 9: Extract from Vidovich Policy Analysis model (VIDO 1267, 2001).

A Conceptual Framework for Analysis of Education Policy and Practices

Lesley Vidovich

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[VIDO1267]

Context of practice/effects

What struggles are occurring over the policy practices/effects?

• Is this policy being practiced in a wide variety of localised contexts?

• How different are the policy practices between, and within, different localised sites?

• Are global/international influences evident in the policy practices at local levels?

• Who *can* access the policy and who *does* access it?

• How open is the policy to interpretation by practitioners?

• How well is the policy received?

• Who put the policy into practice?

• What processes are used to put the policy into practice and why?

• To what extent is the policy (actively or passively) resisted?

• Is resistance collective or individual?

• To what extent is the policy transformed within individual institutions?

• How predictable were the policy practices/effects?

• Are practitioners at the local level empowered by the policy?

• Are practitioners at the local level able to respond rapidly to meet localised needs in this policy domain?

• What are the unintended consequences?

• What is the impact of the policy on different localised groupings based on class, gender, ethnicity, rurality and disability?

• Are there winners and losers?

Appendix10.Sunshine State Policy Standards for pupils aged seven

GRADE: 1

Strand: READING STANDARDS FOR LITERATURE	
College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 1: Key Ideas and Details	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RL.1.1	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
LACC.1.RL.1.2	Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
LACC.1.RL.1.3	Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 2: Craft and Structure	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RL.2.4	Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.
LACC.1.RL.2.5	Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.
LACC.1.RL.2.6	Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 3: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RL.3.7	Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
LACC.1.RL.3.9	Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 4: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RL.4.10	With prompting and support, read prose and poetry of appropriate complexity for grade 1.

Strand: READING STANDARDS FOR INFORMATIONAL TEXT	
College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 1: Key Ideas and Details	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RI.1.1	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
LACC.1.RI.1.2	Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
LACC.1.RI.1.3	Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 2: Craft and Structure	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RI.2.4	Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text.

LACC.1.RI.2.5	Know and use various text features (e.g., headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text.
LACC.1.RI.2.6	Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 3: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RI.3.7	Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.
LACC.1.RI.3.8	Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.
LACC.1.RI.3.9	Identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 4: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RI.4.10	With prompting and support, read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.

Strand: READING STANDARDS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS (K-5)	
College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 1: Print Concepts	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RF.1.1	Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print. a. Recognize the distinguishing features of a sentence (e.g., first word, capitalization, ending punctuation). *LACC.1.RF.1.1a:* Recognize the distinguishing features of a sentence (e.g., first word, capitalization, ending punctuation).

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 2: Phonological Awareness	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RF.2.2	Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes). a. Distinguish long from short vowel sounds in spoken single-syllable words. b. Orally produce single-syllable words by blending sounds (phonemes), including consonant blends. c. Isolate and pronounce initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in spoken single-syllable words. d. Segment spoken single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds (phonemes). *LACC.1.RF.2.2a:* Distinguish long from short vowel sounds in spoken single-syllable words. *LACC.1.RF.2.2b:* Orally produce single-syllable words by blending sounds (phonemes), including consonant blends. *LACC.1.RF.2.2c:* Isolate and pronounce initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in spoken single-syllable words.

	LACC.1.RF.2.2d: Segment spoken single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds (phonemes).

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 3: Phonics and Word Recognition	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RF.3.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. a. Know the spelling-sound correspondences for common consonant digraphs (two letters that represent one sound). b. Decode regularly spelled one-syllable words. c. Know final -e and common vowel team conventions for representing long vowel sounds. d. Use knowledge that every syllable must have a vowel sound to determine the number of syllables in a printed word. e. Decode two-syllable words following basic patterns by breaking the words into syllables. f. Read words with inflectional endings. g. Recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words. *LACC.1.RF.3.3a:* Know the spelling-sound correspondences for common consonant digraphs (two letters that represent one sound). *LACC.1.RF.3.3b:* Decode regularly spelled one-syllable words. *LACC.1.RF.3.3c:* Know final -e and common vowel team conventions for representing long vowel sounds. *LACC.1.RF.3.3d:* Use knowledge that every syllable must have a vowel sound to determine the number of syllables in a printed word. *LACC.1.RF.3.3e:* Decode two-syllable words following basic patterns by breaking the words into syllables. *LACC.1.RF.3.3f:* Read words with inflectional endings. *LACC.1.RF.3.3g:* Recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard 4: Fluency	
STANDARD CODE	**STANDARD**
LACC.1.RF.4.4	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. a. Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. b. Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression. c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary. *LACC.1.RF.4.4a:* Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. *LACC.1.RF.4.4b:* Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression. *LACC.1.RF.4.4c:* Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

Appendix 11 NLS Policy Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The National Literacy Strategy was established in 1997 by the incoming UK government to raise standards of literacy in English primary schools over a five to ten year period. The Strategy was the result of the work of a Literacy Task Force which had been set up by the Shadow Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, in May 1996. The Task Force published a preliminary consultation report in February 1997 (LTF, 1997a) and a final report in August 1997. In its final report (LTF, 1997b) the Task Force set out the details of a 'steady, consistent strategy' for raising standards of literacy which could be sustained over a long period of time and be made a central priority for the education service as a whole. The main strands of the Strategy include:

1. A national target that, by 2002, 80% of 11 year olds should reach the standard expected for their age in English (Level 4) in the National Curriculum tests for Key Stage 2 (7-11 year olds). The proportion reaching this standard in 1996 was 57%. Individual schools were requested to agree related interim targets with their Local Education Authorities (LEAs).
2. A Framework for Teaching (DfEE, 1998a) which (i) sets out termly teaching objectives for the 5-11 age range, (ii) provides a practical structure of time and class management for a daily Literacy Hour and (iii) gives additional guidance on mixed year classes and small schools; children of Reception Age; children with English as an Additional Language (EAL); and children with Special Educational Needs.

The objectives focus on three broad dimensions of literacy: word level work (phonics, spelling and vocabulary and also including handwriting); sentence level work (grammar and punctuation); and text level work (comprehension and composition).

The structure of the Literacy Hour is divided between approximately 30 minutes of whole class teaching, 20 minutes of group and independent work and 10 minutes for whole class review, reflection and consolidation.

The Framework is derived from materials developed in the National Literacy Project, which was set up by the previous government to raise standards in a selected number of LEAs. The Framework notes that further literacy work should be productively linked to other curriculum areas and that additional time may also be needed for:

- reading to the class (e.g. in end of day sessions)
- pupils' own independent reading (for interest and pleasure)
- extended writing (especially for older pupils).

The Strategy recommends that every primary school should adopt the Framework unless it can demonstrate through its action plan, schemes of work and test performance that its own approach is at least as effective.

3. A programme of professional development for all primary teachers, centred on a Literacy Training Pack (DfEE, 1998b). This Pack is made up of course booklets, overhead transparencies and audio and videotapes to support three in-service training days in 1998-9. Headteachers, school literacy co-ordinators and a school governor

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were also allocated two additional LEA-based training days in the summer term of 1998 to help prepare for the professional development programme.

4. Other community-based parts of the Strategy include a media campaign and a series of events in a National Year of Reading (1998-9), Summer Literacy Schools and a range of recommendations for other agencies and institutions.

This Review indicates many of the sources of research and related evidence which underpin the National Literacy Strategy. In particular the Review concentrates on the Framework for Teaching, but it also draws upon sources related to the Policy and Strategic Justifications, School Effectiveness and Management and Issues of Teaching Quality. These sources include findings from survey, experimental and observational research; analyses and discussions from literary scholarship; and reports from curriculum development projects and school inspections. Of particular value have been a number of meta-analyses of research in a particular field and these serve as landmarks at several points in the Review.

Overall, there is substantial evidence to support the case for raising literacy standards in the United Kingdom and considerable support for modifying the ways reading and writing are taught in many primary schools. The relationship between research and practice, in this as in other areas of education, is not a perfect one. It is a relationship which is mediated by many other factors. Nevertheless, the success of the NLS will be influenced by a widespread professional recognition of the need for the modification referred to above and a willingness to accommodate the challenges to knowledge and practice which it will bring.

As it was decided to limit the length of the Review to about 20,000 words, work in preparing it has inevitably had to be of a selective nature but, where appropriate, every effort has been made to refer to sources which identify overviews of relevant evidence.

The selection has been made after extensive consultation of many sources, both printed and electronic, and after discussions or correspondence with many individuals, particularly those listed on the Acknowledgements page. I must add, of course, that the responsibility for the final content is very much my own.

The Review ranges widely and brings together many references from several traditions of thought. The inclusive nature of the Review is a testimony to how the National Literacy Strategy is underpinned by research and related evidence from a variety of disciplines. The complementary nature of much of the evidence is a clear indicator that, if it is widely and sensitively implemented, the National Literacy Strategy offers a major promise of significantly raising standards and of improving the life-chances of thousands of children.